



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

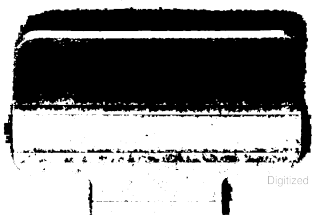
We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





VALENTINE'S EVE.

BY.

MRS. OPIE.

VALENTINE'S EVE.

BY

MRS. OPIE.

"



IN THREE VOLUMES.



VOL. I.



London :

PRINTED FOR

LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,

FATERNOSTER-ROW.

1816.

Printed by Richard and Arthur Taylor, Shoe-Lane, London.

VALENTINE'S EVE.

CHAPTER I.

IN the year eighteen hundred and odd, General Shirley was dining at the house of a friend who lived at the distance of about twenty miles from London, when it was daily expected that an engagement, of great importance in its probable results, would take place between our fleet and that of the enemy.

As the glass gaily circulated, the patriotic sentiments of the company were more warmly and more loudly expressed, till General Shirley declared that, though he had a son on board the admiral's ship, and though that son was an only child, he had rather he should fall in the ensuing

VOL. I.

B

ing

M513918

M513918

ing engagement, than that the arms of England should not prove victorious.

“Bravo! Well said, and nobly felt,” cried the gentleman next him.

“That is what I call a disinterested and true love of one’s country,” observed another.—But before approbation of the general’s Roman virtue had echoed round the table, the father’s feelings had resumed their empire; and while his lip quivered with strong emotion, a pang like that of remorse had struck across his bosom;—for this son, this only child whose death he had allowed himself to contemplate as a preferable event to the defeat of the English powers, had been for years an exile from the general’s presence, though not from his affections, because he had contracted a clandestine and unsuitable marriage. The consequence was, that Captain Shirley on the death of his wife, whom his father had resolutely refused

refused to receive as such, rejected the proffered advances of his now repentant parent, and had gone on board the admiral's vessel as a volunteer in the service, having been some time on shore a post captain without a ship.

"I believe," thought General Shirley, "I could better bear to lose my poor boy were I on good terms with him:" and by the time that the hour for breaking up arrived, much of the general's patriotic glow had subsided, and the image of his long-exiled William rose to his view dearer and more distinct than he had lately beheld it.

"Call my carriage up directly!" cried the general, eager to escape to the indulgence of his now perturbed thoughts: when, just as he was about to depart, news arrived from London that there had been an engagement; that our fleet was vic-

torious; and that a general illumination was at that moment taking place.

Shouts, unimpeded shouts, burst from the company. The general shouted also; but his was the faintest shout of all.

"Come, gentlemen, let us go back and take another bottle to the health of the brave admiral," said the master of the house. "General, general, surely you will not leave us?"

"Excuse me, excuse me," he replied in a faltering tone; "I wish much to hasten to town, to hear if there be any return of the killed and wounded."

The two last words were scarcely audible; and he felt that they were so: hastily therefore entering his carriage to conceal his emotion, he bowed in silence, and drove off; leaving the same men who had applauded so lately the Roman virtue of the patriot, to sympathize with, to pity, and to love, the more natural sensibility of the parent.

"John,"

“John,” cried the general to his servant who was on the barouche seat, “do pray desire those fellows to drive faster.”

John obeyed:—but neither four nor six nor eight horses could have driven the general as fast as his impatience desired.—At length however London, and London in one blaze of light, flashed on the tearful eyes of General Shirley.

“It is true—it is true, then!” murmured he: “and God help the widow, the fatherless, and the—” childless he *would* have added: but the word died away on his lips; and the lifted eye of anxious supplication and fearful hope finished the impulsive prayer.

“John, tell them to drive to the Admiralty,” said the general as soon as they reached the entrance of Parliament-street.

“The Admiralty, sir! Impossible; the crowd is so great.”

“True, true,” he replied: “therefore
let

let me out ; I'll walk to the first coffee-house, and then walk home."

Accordingly the carriage made its way as well as it could : and John being told by the general to accompany it, his agitated master went in pursuit of a coffee-house.

In the morning he had walked lame, and fancied the gout coming on : but now he walked at the rate of four miles in the hour, whenever he found a clear place before him.--At last he reached the place of which he was in search ; and having entered the room, he sunk down on one of the seats and called for a gazette.

"Here is one just come in !" said a waiter.

The general seized it ; and hastily averting his eye from the letter giving an account of the battle, he looked for the fatal list. But before he found it, the name of Captain Shirley caught his attention

rention in the middle of the letter to the Admiralty; and he read that, after boarding most gallantly one of the enemy's ships, and acts of almost incredible valour, Captain Shirley had been struck by a spent ball from another vessel, and had died in the moment of victory!—The paper fell from the hand of the bereaved parent.

“ Thanks to the gods, my boy has done his duty !” broke not from the pale lip of the father ; but, expressing by a groan alone the deep unmitigated anguish of his soul, he staggered into the streets, unheeding either the shouts, the illuminations, or the crowds that pressed around him. His house was in New-street Spring Gardens ; and he had just self-possession enough to take the turn which led to it. But long before he reached that turn, he had been painfully called from the contemplation of the internal view, to a consciousness of the external one: for the
populace,

populace, seeing by his cockade that he was an officer, called on him to throw up his hat with them in honour of our brave tars; and making a desperate effort he had obeyed them. But soon after, he was met and accosted by a set of intoxicated young men, who, addressing him by the title of "My fine fellow of a veteran," desired him to shout for ———, and chorus them in the first stanza of "Rule Britannia!" This was too much to bear: and regarding them with a look stern almost to wildness and ferocity, he exclaimed "Boys! let me pass this moment!" But while they were preparing to impede his passage till he had done as they commanded, one of them, more sober than the rest, saw and recognised him. Immediately, struck with pity and self-reproach, the young man exclaimed, "For shame! let him pass! It is poor General Shirley!"

The

The name operated in an instant on their feelings, and almost with a sobering influence; for, with a respectful bowing of the head, they suddenly fell back; and one of them exclaimed "God bless and support you, sir!"

The general quickened his pace involuntarily, for the epithet "*poor General Shirley*" had roused his feelings to a pitch of agony which he wanted to escape from. But it was impossible; and suddenly slackening his speed, he felt as if his senses would forsake him before he reached his home.

Little was General Shirley aware that an anxious eye was watching him, and a willing though trembling arm was waiting to offer him its weak but eager support.

"It is General Shirley! father of the brave Captain Shirley who died so nobly!" and "Poor man! just heard the news,

B 5

I sup-

I suppose," and other remarks of the kind, had gone from one person to another, till they reached the ears of a girl who was standing near the group of men that had accosted General Shirley, and whose attention had been forcibly attracted by the wild air of the almost frantic parent.

"General Shirley! Is that General Shirley?" she exclaimed—"What! the father who—"

"Yes—the same," replied a gentleman near her.

The girl waited to hear no more; but hastily darting through the crowd she followed the general, and wholly unheeded by him beheld his tottering gait, and prepared herself to break his impending fall by catching him in her arms. However, stimulated to further exertion by the sight of his own door, the general struggled a moment longer against his sensations, and
knocked

knocked feebly. The young girl repeated the knock often and loudly, but unheeded by the object of her care, whose head now sunk against the post, and whose heart died within him still more, when he saw his house alone unlighted amidst the general joy, and felt why it was thus distinguished by its gloom.

When the door opened, the general must have fallen into the hall, but for his youthful supporter, who dragged him from it, and leaned his head against her shoulder. At this moment the door was completely thrown open ; and the astonished servants, receiving their insensible master in their arms, bore him to the sofa in an adjoining room. Thither, unseen, or rather unconsidered by the by-standers, followed the stranger girl ; and while means were taking to revive him, she raised herself on a chair, and looked on with clasped hands, and a countenance of mixed
but

but woful expression. But as soon as the general recovered his senses, the stranger girl jumped hastily down, and, by the noise she made in so doing, caused a gentleman to turn round and to observe her, who, hitherto unconscious of her presence, had been assisting in the recovery of the sufferer. The gentleman started when he saw her, with surprise not unmingled with emotion; for it was impossible not to discover in her pale and agitated countenance the expression of deep and present sorrow. Besides, he thought her features familiar to him; and lowering his voice, he hastily asked the servant who she was and whence she came.

“Indeed we can’t tell, my lord,” replied the gentleman out of livery: “but she followed my master in, and when we opened the door she was supporting him in her arms.”

The

The stranger girl, abashed and alarmed at this inquiry and this answer, (for though spoken in a low voice she overheard it,) now retreated with hasty steps, hoping to escape unobserved : but seeing that the general's eyes were reclosed, she stopped, and with a trembling voice said, "I suppose it is quite sure that he *will* recover?"

"O yes ! he is almost quite recovered now, madam," replied the gentleman in a kind encouraging tone. And at this moment the general starting up looked eagerly towards her, and inquired who that lady was, while the object of his inquiry tried to leave the room.

"Stop her," cried he : "I have a confused recollection of some one's saving me from falling."

"Right, sir," said one of the servants ;
"and it was this young lady who supported

ported you and followed you in when the door opened."

"Yes," added the gentleman, "and she has kindly staid to see you recover."

"But I am going away directly now," cried the stranger girl.

"No, no," said the general rising; "stop—tell me, did you know and *pity* me, that you followed me in and staid here till I recovered?"

"I did, I did."

"Perhaps you too have lost some one you loved, in this engagement?" said the gentleman inquiringly.

"O yes, yes."

"Then you can indeed feel for me," observed the general.

"O sir," she replied, "there is only you in the wide world that can truly sympathize with me."

"Are

“Are then our griefs so similar, my poor child?”

The stranger girl, while vainly endeavouring to reply, burst into tears.

“Lionel! Lord Shirley, do speak to her; ask her who she is.”

“Will you inform us, madam,” said Lord Shirley in a soothing voice, “whom the general has to thank for this kind attention?”

“Not now—not now,” she replied, “some other time—some other time:—but I am an orphan, a friendless orphan.”

“Rendered so by this *last* engagement?”

“Yes, yes. And now let me go.”

“That alone?” replied Lord Shirley.

“I *came* alone.”

“True—and it is strange that a young creature like you should be alone in the streets, and on such a night as this.”

“O sir!” she exclaimed in agony,
“they

“they made me *wild*, and I rushed out of the house : I *could* not, *would* not stay at home to see the house I lived in lighted up as if in joy for my poor father’s death!”

“Brutes! Who could do so?” cried the general indignantly : “my house, you see, is *dark* as my *soul*.”

“Aye, and it suits me,” she returned.

“Come hither, my poor orphan girl! and be assured that I will befriend you,” cried the general, for a while diverted from his own sorrow by the sight of hers. So saying, he drew her reluctantly towards him, and gazed earnestly on her half-averted face. Lord Shirley gazed as earnestly ; and, telling the servants that they might withdraw, awaited in some emotion the termination of this singular scene,—a scene which was at least useful, by drawing the general’s attention from his own severe affliction.

“And

“And so you are an orphan! and you live with brutes, poor child! But come, tell me your father’s name at least.”

“Oh no, not now—not—”

“So you said before. This is very mysterious!”

“Very,” returned Lord Shirley thoughtfully. “My dear general,” added he, “tell me, did you never see eyes and eyebrows and a chin like those?” directing his eye to the now blushing face of the stranger.

The general gazed on her, started, breathed short, and, calling for a glass of wine that stood near, drank it off in great agitation.

The stranger girl meanwhile escaped from his encircling arm, but now found her flight arrested by that of Lord Shirley.

“Child!” cried the general in a solemn tone, “I insist on your revealing your name and situation.”

The

The stranger girl, awed and affected, sunk upon her knees ; and while the general lifted up the dark and glossy ringlets that obscured her eyes and brow, she clasped her hands together, and looked piteously and imploringly in his face.

“ Speak, speak,” he rejoined : “ Who are you ?”

“ I am the daughter of your son.”

“ I thought so,” exclaimed Lord Shirley in a tone of pleasure ; while the general, after gazing intently on her one moment more, raised her in his arms, and, clasping her convulsively to his bosom, wept over her in speechless emotion : but suddenly releasing her, he said—

“ I must have proof, *substantial* proof.” On which the trembling girl took out of her bosom a letter and a picture.

“ This,” said she in a faint voice, “ is my last letter from him, and came with the dispatches ; and this is his picture.”

“ Take

“ Take it away, take it away,” cried the general: “ and here, do you read the letter, Shirley. I can’t bear to look at either. However, there are proofs sufficient: and, O thou merciful Providence! I thank Leave us, Lionel.” Then, while he clasped his agitated granddaughter in his arms again, Lord Shirley, little less affected himself, left the newly discovered relations together.

CHAP.

CHAPTER II.

THE letter presented by Catherine Shirley to her grandfather, which he dared not look at, but which he gave to Lord Shirley to read, was as follows :

“ MY DEAREST CHILD,

“ Orders are issued for a general engagement to-morrow, and this may be the last time I shall ever address you. Mark then, and attend to my last commands !

“ I have at length written to my father, and the letter of a son to a parent. I have told my father where to find you, and have bequeathed you to his *care* ; and when he knows you, I am sure he will also take you to his *love*. Then, let me conjure you to forget for ever your mother's wrongs, and your father's misery.

Had

Had my father not been under influence, I know he would have acted differently, and we might all now have been the happy inmates of his roof. But God willed it otherwise, and I submit. And *now*, that it is perhaps too late, I would give worlds to see my father once more, and exchange forgiveness with him ! But let *your tenderness* make him amends for the long loss of mine. Be to him the child I ought to have been, and the child you have ever been to me ! Be his pride and blessing, as you have ever been mine, my child ; and could I have learnt to be happy *again*, I should have found my happiness in you.—But it could not be.—Morning dawns ! and every thing is in motion around me.

“ Oh ! I could utter a thousand tender wishes, and give way to a thousand tender feelings ! but I must not unman myself.—

My

my child, my child ! my sweet, tender, dutiful, affectionate Catherine ! farewell ! perhaps for ever.

“ It is soothing to me to think that, if I fall, you and my father will mourn for me together.”

After Lord Shirley had read this letter, he was not disposed to converse at all, as he truly loved his gallant cousin ; and he was still less inclined to converse with the lady that now addressed him.

“ My lord, Lord Shirley,” cried a voice from the staircase, “ what is all this fuss about ?”

“ Pshaw !” muttered Lord Shirley ; for the speaker was Mrs. Baynton, the widowed sister of the general ; and Lord Shirley was in no humour for hearing or answering her interrogatories at such a moment ;—especially as he had very recently

cently parted with her, and in no pleasant humour,—for they had just had a dispute of some length on the propriety of illuminating the house ; Mrs. Baynton having contended that private ought always to be lost in public feeling ; and that the well-known loyalty of the Shirleys would be properly called in question if the general's house was not lighted up, though his only child had fallen in the glorious strife of arms : while Lord Shirley as warmly declared that such an exhibition of loyalty would be a proof of unnatural insensibility, and an insult to his poor cousin's memory. And as Lord Shirley was the head of her house, and a nobleman also, Mrs. Baynton had such a respect for his opinion, that, though it did not *convince* her, she acted upon it, and the house remained unilluminated.

Soon after she had retired to her room, to conceal as she said the grief she felt,
but

but in reality to hide her inability to feel enough, as she had never liked her nephew, because he was not obsequious enough to her will; and therefore she had joined the general's late wife, Captain Shirley's mother-in-law, in schemes to keep the general and his son at variance. It was this lady who now addressed Lord Shirley in the words I have related above; and, as she spoke, invited him to join her in her dressing-room. Lord Shirley at first hesitated to accept the invitation; but recollecting that he should spare the general some trouble and some pain by revealing to his sister the discovery that had taken place, he followed her into her apartment.

“ Dear me, my lord ! what does this mean ? was there ever any thing so strange ? My maid tells me that a girl of the town has followed my brother home ! ”

“ Your

“Your maid, madam, must have an inventive imagination.”

“How?—It is not true then?”

“Certainly not. But lively as the said maid’s fancy is, I defy her to imagine who the young person that followed the general turns out to be.”

“So, then, you own some one *did* follow him home?”

“Yes, madam,—a poor orphan girl, whom you will be charmed to see and to embrace.”

“I!”

“Yes; you will rejoice as much as I do, to see the orphan child of your poor nephew Captain Shirley acknowledged by the general her grandfather, and received to his heart and his protection.”

“What ridiculous stuff is this, my lord? What child are you talking of?”

“Of your *great-niece*, madam—Miss Shirley.”

VOL. I.

C

“There

“There is no such person ; and if the girl you left with the general calls herself any such thing, she is an impostor. I know the first child died, and I never heard of there being another.”

“Well, madam, I shall say no more ; as you deal in assertion only, and we in proofs.”

“In proofs !”

Luckily for Lord Shirley, as Mrs. Baynton was becoming very angry, the general's bell rang at this moment, and he was summoned to him.

“Well, Lionel,” said the general as soon as he saw him, “I have been humbling myself before my Maker and before her—Yes, I have knelt to her, and asked her to forgive my unkindness to my poor boy and her poor mother ; and she says she hopes she shall be able in time to love me, for she seems a very honest girl, and no flatterer. O Lionel ! surely the hand of Providence was visible in thus directing

directing the fatherless girl, at such a moment as this, to the childless parent !”

Here the general's voice failed him ; while Catherine Shirley sat by his side with the look of one calm, because overwhelmed by the acuteness and variety of her sensations.

“ But where's my sister ? Let her come to me :—it is very strange she did not come to me during my fit.”

Lord Shirley rang the bell to desire Mrs. Baynton to be called : when, as he turned to look at the wild countenance of his newly found relation, he saw it assume a look of terror, and beheld her, involuntarily as it were, get closer to the general ; for Catherine knew from her unhappy father the character of her aunt, and she trembled at the thought of being introduced to so formidable a being. At length Mrs. Baynton entered : and the general, bursting into tears, stretched out his

his arms to embrace her. But no answering tear proclaimed her sympathy with his sorrows. True, she suffered his embrace ; but scarcely could she be said to return it : and had not the general been wholly absorbed in his own emotion, he must have observed the repelling coldness of her manner.

“ O Jane !” said he at length ; “ you see it has pleased God to punish me for my hardness of heart, by depriving me of my poor boy : but, kind in his wrath, and tempering justice with mercy, he has sent me at the same moment an antidote to the bane, in this dear girl !—Sister, take to your heart your great-niece and my grand-daughter—Catherine Shirley, my poor William’s child.”

Whether it was that there was something in the sound of great-niece particularly unpalatable to the ear of Mrs. Baynton I will not pretend to say ; but certain

tain it is; that, haughily retreating from the general as he drew Catherine towards her, she exclaimed, "Stuff and nonsense, brother! she is no more William's child than I am."

"How!" cried the general, "is the woman insane?"

"No, brother, but you are, or you would not have fancied a trolloping-looking miss like that your grand-daughter."

"And why not?" answered the general, almost choked with emotion.

"Why not? Is it likely that Miss Shirley, if there be such a young person, should be running about the streets by herself at this time of night?"

"Yes—*very* possible, most oracular gentlewoman.—Not Miss Shirley living *where* and *as* a Miss Shirley *ought* to live, but a poor orphan girl residing with a *brute*, would have done exactly as Miss Shirley did."

"And

“ And so you think that poor thing is Catherine Shirley your great-niece? How do you know that your son ever had a daughter?” angrily interrupted his sister.

“ What! have you forgotten that four years ago, when William disclosed his marriage, he implored me to allow him to introduce his wife and daughter to me? Answer—have you forgotten that?”

“ I do remember something of it now— But how do you know that this girl is that daughter?”

“ By her own simple tale, and other incontrovertible tokens which she has about her.—Produce them, dear child.”

Catherine obeyed:—but in vain. The irreconcilable aunt exclaimed, “ Well; but the real Miss Shirley may be dead, and these things have been stolen.”

“ Stolen!” cried the astonished Catherine; “ what is it, then, she takes me for?” clinging to the arm of the general.

“ For

“For an impostor, miss,” vociferated Mrs. Baynton.

This was more than the general's patience could bear : but in vain did he strive to utter the anger with which his bosom swelled. However, had his command of words been equal to his rage, and had he studied for hours how best to wound the feelings of his provoking antagonist, he could not have succeeded more effectually than he did, by uttering with a vehement and impressive gesture,—“Sister, you are, —you are, a—an old woman !”

“And you, brother, are an old fool !” returned Mrs. Baynton, forgetting in her wrath the decorum of language proper to be observed by a daughter of the house of Shirley.

“Madam,” replied the general, trying to be calm, “let me tell you a plain tale.—In the first place, it was my intention to seek out the daughter of my lost son

son as soon as I recovered my recollection after I saw the fatal paper; little thinking that the being who was then in my thoughts was at that very moment by my side, watching my tottering steps with pity and interest, because she knew who I was, and why I suffered."

"Mighty sentimental, indeed! But how come miss in the street, I say? Answer me that."

"Because the brute with whom she lived insisted on illuminating the house, and thereby drove the wretched orphan forth like a bedlamite."

Here Lord Shirley could not help giving a loud hem, which was not lost on Mrs. Baynton; and she angrily answered, "A brute! No! I think such demonstrations of loyalty very proper.—Private feeling ought to be forgotten in the public good. (Here the general groaned aloud, for he remembered his own patriotic boasting

ing

ing at the dinner-table.)—Do you think, general, the Romans and the *Spartans* would have called the person you mention a brute? No, brother—no—and I blush for you, General Shirley; I blush to see you so unlike that admirable being, a *Roman father*!”

“ ‘Sdeath, madam! it is quite enough for a family to have in it a Roman old woman!—I believe your heart is made of marble, sister.”

“ And your head, general, of a much softer material.”

“ I had better go away,—I had better return home,” said the terrified Catherine.

“ Home!” exclaimed the general—
“ home! Is not this your home, child? Never, never while I live, shall you have any other home than my house! nor my house any other mistress!”

“ Mighty fine! mighty fine indeed!

So then, without further inquiry you resolve to bring home nobody-knows-who, and turn your poor sister out of doors!"

Here she gave way to a most outrageous fit of passion concealed in the sobs of an hysteric. But the general knew how to distinguish between the sob of grief and that of passion; and, approaching her with a look at once indignant and commanding, was about to say something relative to his future intentions which he might perhaps in a cooler moment have wished to retract, when Lord Shirley thought it safer for all parties that he should interfere; and, gently putting the general back with his hand, he said,

"Dear sir, let me speak to Mrs. Baynton—perhaps I shall be able to convince her:" whilst the general, faint and exhausted with contending emotions, was
very

very glad to be saved further exertion for the present.

“ Look up, madam,” said Lord Shirley soothingly, “ and suffer yourself to survey the face of her whom, perhaps with proper caution, you consider as an object of suspicion.” But Mrs. Baynton continued to sob, and to hide her face.

“ Nay, do let me prevail on you to listen to my request.” Then, taking the almost reluctant hand of the alarmed Catherine, he led her up to her aunt.

“ See here !” added he, respectfully parting and holding back the ebon ringlets that hung in wild disorder over the face of Catherine Shirley—“ see here ! Surely you have often beheld features like these ? I know that you are proud of the blood and gallant deeds of the Shirleys ; but have you not equal reason to be proud of that peculiar eye, and brow, and forehead, which belong to your branch of the family,

mily, and which you must behold in your looking-glass every day?"

This was the way to melt the marble of Mrs. Baynton's heart—and not calling her old woman; and she very soon uncovered her face, looked at the Shirley eyes, brows, and forehead, with something like complacency, and at length exclaimed—

"Well, really I do think I see the likeness you mention; but she has certainly not gotten the Shirley nose, my lord. However, if there can be any satisfactory *references*, I am sure I shall not be averse to receive her as my niece."

"Certainly not, when properly convinced," observed Lord Shirley; who, alarmed at the evident agitation of the general at having the slightest shade of doubt thrown over a relationship from which he derived at that moment his greatest source of earthly consolation, thought

thought it was better to soothe this provoking woman into the necessary conviction, especially as her hesitation to believe the forlorn-looking girl before them to be the daughter of her nephew was not devoid of proper and necessary caution. For, however a gently swelling tear may add a sort of touching grace to the eyes on some occasions, I never yet could discover that the swollen eyelids, swelled cheeks, and inflamed complexion incident to violent and continued bursts of sorrow, had any other effect, even on beauty, except to annihilate its existence for the time being. And though the dark colour, and the peculiar length of the Shirley eye, together with the beautifully full and finely marked brow, and the low well-shaded forehead of the family, could not but be visible in the face of Catherine, in despite of tears, paleness, and agitation—still it is very certain that a less interested and

and less accurate observer could not, in a girl with loose disordered hair streaming over her shoulders, dressed only in her coloured morning-gown, now dragged and torn during her often dangerous progress through the crowd, have been very easily induced to believe they saw the grand-daughter, and probably the heiress, of a general and a Shirley.

“ But may I not go back to Mrs. Merle’s for to-night ?” asked Catherine.

“ No—I will send to say you are now under *my* protection ; and *to-morrow*, if it be necessary, I will see Mrs. Merle,” replied the general.

“ But, dear sir, pray send directly,” rejoined Catherine ; “ for the poor soul will really be much alarmed on my account, and Lucy her daughter is very kind to me, and loves me dearly.”

“ I will send this moment,” said the general. “ She lives, you say, just at
the

the foot of Westminster-bridge?—And you, madam, if you please, will order a bed to be got ready for Miss Shirley.”

“What! at this time of night! She had much better go home, and come back to-morrow.”

“Have I not said she shall stay here?” replied the general in a voice of thunder.

“But there is no bed aired.”

“No! You know the best bed was slept in last night.”

“The *best* bed! Yes—but—”

“But what? Do you think that too good for Miss Shirley? too good for my only comfort, for the child of my lost William!” Here, folding his new-found relative to his heart, he gave way to a violent burst of tears, which affected even his sister, and made her almost resolve to thwart him no longer.

When he recovered himself, he rang the bell, saying as he did so, “Now, before

before I retire for the night, let me do an act of duty — And O that the blessed spirits of my lost son and his lamented wife could hover over me while I perform it !”

When a servant appeared, he said, “ John, you must go to this place,” writing down the address on a card, “ and tell Mrs. Merle, the owner of the house, that Miss Shirley is here, and will stay the night ; but that to-morrow I request Mrs. Merle to call on me.—Yet no ; say that to-morrow at twelve Miss Shirley shall call on her. But before you go, John, call hither every servant in the house.”

John obeyed ; and presently the room was filled with servants of both sexes.

“ I sent for you all in,” said the general, hardly able to speak from various emotions, “ that you may hear me acknowledge this young lady to be Catherine Shirley, the only child of my only
child

child Captain Shirley, now, alas! no more: and also to receive my orders that you henceforth consider her as my heiress and your mistress, and treat her and respect her accordingly."

The servants bowed, and felt not a little pleased at the idea of having a young mistress, the old one not being much to their tastes. But just as they were retiring, the general heard a sob, and saw in the back-ground an old woman, who, having passed her youth in the service of his family, was, he thought, privileged to remain in it, though past active work, till the end of her existence.

"Ah! are you there, Norris?" cried the general with a quivering lip: "I thought you must be gone to-bed. I am sure you are glad of what you have just heard; as—" But before he could finish his sentence Catherine had turned round, had seen Norris, and bursting into tears
had

had run to her, and sunk sobbing on her shoulder.

“What is all this?” cried the general kindly.

“More stage effect,” said Mrs. Baynton.

But when Norris recovered her speech, she explained the scene, by simply stating that she had occasionally visited her dear young master at his own house, and therefore was well known to his child.

“Proof! irrefragable proof! Mrs. Baynton,” cried the general triumphantly.

“And contrivance too, no doubt: I dare say Norris contrived the rencontre of to-night.”

“It must have been in a sick-bed then, madam,” replied Mrs. Norris; “for there I have been these two days: but when I heard that the child of my dear lost young master was in this house, I felt well again and got up, in hope of seeing her

her sweet face, and hearing what I have heard."

"You shall not stay up a minute longer, my dear woman," cried the general in a hoarse but affectionate voice: "go to-bed directly! And Catherine shall go up stairs with you; for I dare say she loves you better than any of us at present:—so go away together. And you," addressing himself to the upper housemaid, "shall go into Mrs. Norris's room and let Miss Shirley know when her bed, the best bed, is ready for her."

This was indeed a kindness to poor Catherine, who in the affectionate and faithful friend of her father saw an object certainly dearer to her than any other under her grandfather's roof; and for a moment her dark eye beamed with some of its usual brilliancy: then dropping a curtsy, she eagerly placed the arm of Mrs. Norris in hers.

But

But the general opened his arms to her ; and throwing herself into them, she met his kiss of mingled feelings ; and curtsying coldly to her great-aunt, but kindly to Lord Shirley, she gladly retired with her humble but endeared companion.

With her vanished all the energy of the bereaved parent ; and hastily taking the chamber candlestick which Lord Shirley gave him, he returned with a convulsive grasp the affectionate pressure of his kinsman's hand ; and rushing from the room was seen no more that night.

Spite of the lateness of the hour—for it was near midnight—Mrs Baynton would fain have detained Lord Shirley to talk to him of her distresses, and complain of the temper and tyranny of her brother, and his folly in pretending to put this probably uneducated child at the head of his family. But disgusted with her want of sensibility to the loss of his
cousin

cousin Captain Shirley, and of proper feeling for the distresses of her brother, and his heart and head both full of the scene which he had witnessed, the young earl coldly wished her good night, alleging the lateness of the hour. And angry with every one, Mrs. Baynton retired to her apartment. But before she went to bed she regained some composure of mind, from the remarks of her officious maid, who was full of wonder at the discovery of the evening, full of indignation at the idea of her dear mistress's being likely in future to rank as second-best in the family, and full of surprise to think that the general's gentleman, John, and the other men, should think the new Miss Shirley at all good-looking.

When John reached Mrs. Merle's, he found the family in great consternation. But while the daughter vented her terror for the safety of Miss Shirley in tears and lamenta-

lamentations, the mother gave way to her fears and her resentment in loud and vehement abuse of the runaway. John's visit and the message he brought were, however, equally welcome to both, inasmuch as it gave assurance of Miss Shirley's being in safety. But the idea of her residing in future with her grandfather was a very unwelcome one to the interested mother, as she would lose by that means a certain income, though, as the means of good to Catherine, it gratified her more disinterested and benevolent daughter. Still, with all her faults, Mrs. Merle was a conscientious woman, John said ; for till he produced the card with General Shirley's name on it on which he had written her address, she could not be assured Miss Shirley was safe ; nor could she rest satisfied without going to the place where John said she was, in order to ascertain her safety ; nor would she after all

all let him return unaccompanied by her own maid, to whose care Mrs. Merle gave what indeed Catherine in the hurry of her spirits had forgotten to send for, namely, night-clothes and changes of linen.

When Catherine awoke the next morning, and awoke to the entire consciousness of where she was, mingled and overwhelming were the sensations that arose in her bosom; and with her morning prayers of thankfulness were mixed humble entreaties to be endowed with that resignation which her sense of acute suffering rendered necessary to her. For true, she was under the roof of her grand-father, and his acknowledged, his cherished heiress. — But how came she there? and why was she so readily received and acknowledged?—Alas! it was by the greatest of all misfortunes,—the loss of her only surviving and idolized parent. Dearly therefore

fore had her present proud distinction been purchased. Besides, was she not now receiving the love and protection of him who had refused to acknowledge her beloved mother?—was she not also likely to live under the same roof with that relentless woman, who had increased her father's self-reproof for having married in a clandestine manner, by writing to him letters full of bitter reproach? And while these afflicting thoughts thronged upon her memory, it required all her strength of mind, unusually strong as that mind was for the early age of eighteen, to enable her to bear up against the power of contending emotions. But at length she was comforted, by recollecting that it was her father's last command she should reside with the general, and expiate his faults towards him by her filial love and devoted attention. Yet severe was the conflict in her mind, and powerful were its effects on her

her frame ; for, as soon as she rose, an alarming attack of fever forced her to return to bed again, and before night she was so seriously ill that the general, who had shut himself up all the day to indulge his sorrow unseen in his own apartment, was now anxious to leave it, that he might watch with apprehensive affection in that of his new-found treasure—a treasure which he feared had been bestowed on him only to be taken away just as he had learnt to feel its inestimable value.

CHAPTER III.

It cannot be supposed that Mrs. Baynton herself would be a very tender nurse to her new-found and unwelcome relation; nor is it at all surprising that, having a great dread of infection, she should forbear during Catherine's illness, which was pronounced to be of an infectious nature, from making any personal inquiries concerning her. But she was very careful to prevent any noise, lest it should disturb the invalid; and she provided everything that was necessary for her niece's comfort with praiseworthy attention.

This lady was the only sister of General Shirley, and when in the prime of her life she was celebrated for her beauty, her wit, and her accomplishments. But when lips cease to be young, the sayings
which

which before passed for witty, often sink in general estimation into common-place flippancies : and in this age of accomplishments, the usual proficiency made by a boarding-school miss forty years ago would never entitle a young lady to be reckoned really accomplished.

However, at the time of day when the honourable Mr. Baynton wooed and won her virgin heart, Miss Shirley was universally admired, and Mr. Baynton was thought a fortunate man, to carry off the prize which had been so often and so vainly attempted before. Whether he found his conquest worth the pains it had cost him, it is impossible to tell ; but, had he lived, it is probable that the general's sister and Catherine's great-aunt might have been rendered a more amiable person than either subsequently found her.

Mr. Baynton united to strong sense, great firmness of character and great command

command of temper, which enabled him to treat as she deserved the petted and violent baby whom he had taken to wife. But just as he had lived long enough to convince her that hysterics, sullenness, eating no dinner or supper, and other devices of the kind, had no power to affect his feelings in appearance, or carry one point on which her perverse heart was fixed, this rational and salutary guide was taken away from her, and Mrs. Baynton was left with all the original infirmity of her temper increased by sorrow and disappointment; for she loved her husband, and liked the state in which his large income, the chief of which went on his death to the male heir, enabled her to live.

When the general's second wife died, he requested her to come and preside over his family; a request she gladly acceded to, because, though her own fortune was

was good, and her jointure rather considerable, they did not enable her to live as the general did, and Mrs. Baynton was more than a little attached to the pomp and circumstance of life. What else she was, will be, I think, sufficiently evident in the course of the narrative.

Perhaps this will be a proper time to give some account of Mrs. Merle and her daughter Lucy, that affectionate friend of Catherine, who vainly endeavoured to be permitted to be her nurse when informed of her severe and even dangerous illness.

Mrs. Merle's husband was a brewer and linen-draper in a country town, and she herself was the daughter of a farmer in the neighbourhood. For some years they seemed to be in the way of making a fortune; but Mr. Merle was an extravagant, improvident, speculating man; and
all

all his wife's industry and frugality proved insufficient at length to save him from bankruptcy—the consequence of his own vices. Not that he attributed his ruin to himself, and living in a style beyond what his means and original station in life warranted. On the contrary ; to the times, the taxes, and the government, he imputed his misfortunes ; and was one of the many republicans, or democrats, some twenty years ago, whom profligacy and poverty led to rally round that respectable standard, which was originally erected from the purest and most disinterested love of civil and religious liberty. Having vainly endeavoured to get his certificate signed, Mr. Merle, after enduring much poverty and distress, emigrated from tyrannical Britain (as he called it,) to free republican America ; having instilled into his disappointed wife and youthful daughter the same political senti-

sentiments which hatred of all those more prosperous than himself, and the jaundiced feelings of disappointment, had led him to utter and to act upon. But though the vulgar mind and violent temper of the mother learnt from her husband only hatred of the existing government, and an admiration of the system of equality; then so much the subject in debate, that of the daughter was led by her father's conversation, and that of the politicians who assembled at his house, to imbibe the purest flame of liberty and the purest love of republicanism. Eagerly did she read, like Madame Roland, the Lives of Plutarch, and Cornelia and her noble sons were the idols of her young heart; while the vanity of her father was not a little flattered by the orations in praise of liberty which his beautiful patriot, as he called her, was in the habit of repeating to his sympathizing associates. Her father's misfortunes,

fortunes, and her father's wrongs as he taught her to consider them, bound these opinions still closer to her heart, till virtue and republicanism became identified with each other in her estimation; and she believed that to the privileged orders were confined every species of vice and every description of error.

As she grew older, and became the companion of Catherine Shirley, to whom at first she could hardly forgive her noble connexions and ancient name, she grew more moderate in her feelings, more enlarged in her ideas, and more reserved in disclosing them; and for the sake of Catherine Shirley and her father, Lucy Merle believed that the well-born might be good. But then Lucy recollected with some pleasure that Catherine's mother was low-born, and a distant connexion of her own; therefore it was but fair to suppose that the influence of low counter-acted

acted the baneful influence of noble blood.

This is a faint sketch of the tall, dignified, and beautiful girl, who, with all the republican pride that she could call forth for the occasion, and with the consciousness of more than her sex's usual intellect and eloquence, knocked at the door of General Shirley, to inquire why Miss Shirley had not called on her mother according to her appointment.

Such was the appearance of Lucy Merle, that no one could fancy her less than a gentlewoman; and even the pert maid of Mrs. Baynton, who happened to be in the hall when the door was opened to her, would have treated her with respect, though she was without a servant, had she not heard her talk of her mother Mrs. Merle; and as Catherine, in her delirium, had raved of Lucy Merle, and Norris had explained whom her poor young lady meant,

it was evident to Mrs. Watkins (the maid mentioned above) that the tall girl at the door was the vulgar associate and intimate of Miss Shirley, who her mistress had declared should never, if she could help it, set foot within their doors. Accordingly, when Lucy, as pale as death on hearing that Catherine was ill, earnestly besought to be allowed to see her and wait on her, the officious abigail told her she knew for certain she would not be allowed to see Miss Shirley.

"You cannot know it for certain," replied Lucy, "for I am sure there is no one Miss Shirley would so well like to have for a nurse;—and let me but see the general, I am sure he will grant me the permission which I ask."

"You can't see him—he is too wretched to see any one; and he never leaves the sick-chamber."

"Then let me see the general's sister."

"The

"The general's sister, indeed! My mistress has a name," said Watkins bridling.

"I suppose you mean the honourable Mrs. Baynton?"

"Here's a fuss about nothing," cried John coming forward. "If the young lady wishes it, why should she not see the honourable Mrs. Baynton? and I'll carry any message from her to my master."

"She see my mistress! and my mistress see her indeed! I will soon show you the odds of that." Then, after casting a contemptuous look on Lucy Merle, she walked up stairs with great dignity.

Had not poor Lucy been wholly absorbed in anxiety for Catherine's illness, this saucy contempt from a servant in the house of a man of rank and fashion would have led her into a strain of moral reflection, and the *privileged orders* would not have gained in her estimation by this circum-

circumstance. But till Watkins returned she paced up and down the hall, unconscious of the respectful admiration with which the servants regarded her, and the sympathy they felt for her evidently alarmed affection for their young mistress. At length, full of consequence and spite, Watkins came back from her self-empowered embassy, and told Lucy that her lady could not possibly allow a young person whom she knew nothing about to be admitted to Miss Shirley, especially in her present state ; and that she must insist on her quitting the house directly.

“ But I conclude the general knows nothing of this refusal and this message ? ” replied Lucy.

“ And suppose he does not, miss ! do you suppose that my lady is not mistress here, and has not a right to order here ? ”

“ The more’s the pity, then, ” answered Lucy mournfully : “ it is always to be lamented

lamented when tyrants govern; and I remember well"—But recollecting that she had no right to speak degradingly of a mistress to her servant, she paused before she uttered the remainder of the sentence, which was,—that she well knew Mrs. Baynton's character; and slowly and dejectedly left the door. But John followed her, and said—

“If you think proper, miss, to write to the general, I will take care that he shall have the letter.” And Lucy, eagerly thanking him, went home with her heart a little lightened; for she fancied the general would not refuse her request.—Accordingly she wrote to him; and having delivered her letter herself into John's own hand, she waited the result of her application with trembling impatience.

But John's countenance when he came down stairs convinced her she had no favour to expect, even before he spoke:
for

for the kind-hearted man had been met at the door of the general's dressing-room, where he then was, by Mrs. Baynton, who, hastily seizing the letter, desired to know if it had not been brought by that girl in the hall, who was, Watkins told her, Lucy Merle. John was forced to answer "Yes;" and that he had promised to deliver it himself into the general's hand.

"Then say I took it from you," replied Mrs. Baynton, entering the room and shutting the door in his face, "and that I shall take care it is delivered to the general."

Accordingly, she said to the general—"Brother, here is a letter from these Merles; I conclude you are not in a frame of mind to attend to business now?"

"Not I—not I:—take away the letter: I can't read it. I can't be troubled now—now that I am half-distracted."

"I thought so," answered his sister, delighted

delighted at having carried her point so easily : and with a countenance of triumph she told John to tell his employer that the general could not be troubled, and could not now read the letter. And this message, of which John almost doubted the truth, he was most unwillingly obliged to deliver to Lucy.

She heard it with the most painful feeling of disappointment ; especially as the nurse had informed her that Catherine's symptoms continued very unfavourable.

At this moment Mrs. Baynton was passing from the general's to her own room ; and Lucy being told by John who she was, suddenly ran after her, and earnestly entreated that she would hear her but for one moment.—In vain, however, did she plead : Mrs. Baynton, without even looking at her, ran hastily into her own apartment, at the door of which Mrs. Watkins

Watkins posted herself, as if to defend the entrance. Nor was her presence there entirely unnecessary ; for Lucy was moved by the despair of anxious affection to attempt any thing in order to have carried her purpose ;—and would have intruded even into the presence of Mrs. Baynton : but this daring being (she found) impracticable, she addressed her through the half-closed door ; and assuring her that Miss Shirley loved her sufficiently to derive pleasure from her presence and attentions, she conjured Mrs. Baynton, for the sake of common humanity, no longer to let her niece be doomed to receive the assiduities of strangers, whom no habitual intimacy could as yet have endeared to her.

“ Tell her,” said the angry aunt to her maid, “ tell her I understand and resent the low-born sarcasm ; and that my humanity leads me to forbid my niece,
Miss

Miss Shirley, from intimacy and association with such a person as herself."

"Madam," replied Lucy approaching the door, but prevented entering it by the officious abigail, "Madam, I *expected* to be forbidden to associate with Miss Shirley when she was *well*, for I am acquainted with the hard heart of aristocracy; but all I ask is to be admitted to her presence when *ill*, and when summer and high-born friends may not be so willing to approach her."

"Approach her indeed!" cried Mrs. Baynton; "who that could help it would? Has she not an infectious fever?—do you know that, silly girl?"

"She would have nursed me, I am sure, had I had the plague," said Lucy, sobbing; "and all I ask is, at any risk, to be allowed to nurse her: and I am certain, if she is asked whether she would not like that I should come to her, she would

would say Yes. Pray, then, let her be asked the question."

"Absurd! Why, do not you know she is quite delirious?"

Lucy said no more: but clasping her hands, she dropped down on the step of the stairs, and groaned aloud; till even Mrs. Baynton, unable to bear the sound of her distress, desired Watkins to come in and shut the door.

As soon as she was a little recovered the porter begged her to recline in his chair, and John brought her a glass of wine. This offer she declined; but she told him she had a favour to ask, which she hoped he would be so kind as to grant; and this was, that he would not think it a trouble to answer her inquiries for her sick friend, let her come ever so often. And not only John but the porter and the butler assured her they should think it no trouble; and if she liked to come at
the

the hours the physicians did, she should be welcome to stay in the hall till they were gone again, and speak to them too if she liked.

“ Kind and humane creatures !” cried Lucy, “ you have hearts ! You can feel, while—” But here she had resolution to stop, and to content herself with contrasting mentally the *tiers état* with the *privileged orders* ; and giving, as usual, the palm of desert to the former :—for Lucy was not at all aware that it was from no republican virtue, unknown to the aristocracy, that these footmen were so kind to her, but merely from the very natural influence of youth and beauty in distress :—besides, they hated their old mistress, and were very much disposed, were it only to provoke her, to be civil to the friend of their young one. But as system-mongers see in every thing proofs of the wisdom of their system, Lucy was for a few moments

ments stolen from much of the agony she experienced from her friend's illness, by indignant reflections on the flinty hearts of persons in high life.

Mrs. Baynton meanwhile was equally fortified in her dislike of the low-born, by what she termed the democratic insolence of the girl Merle. And while she remembered the expression of "the hard heart of aristocracy," she felt her dislike of her great-niece increased, by the suspicion that she probably had imbibed the same notions.

In the evening Lucy came again, and heard from the attentive John the opinion of the physicians. The next day and the two following ones she regularly repeated her visits morning and evening; and on the fifth morning she had the joy of hearing that Catherine Shirley was declared entirely out of danger.

Though Lucy had republican principles,

ples, she wanted republican firmness; and her delight was manifested in a very violent flood of tears, while even her friend John could not help saying,

“ Dear me, Miss Merle, it is very odd you should take on thus, when my young lady is better! You could do no more if she were going to die.”

“ Joy has its tears as well as grief,” replied Lucy, “ my good friend, and mine is now at its height :—but let me show my sense of your kindness and that of your fellow-servants, thus, to the best of my poor ability.” So saying, she slipped a piece of silver into each of their hands: and I believe her admiration of the dignity of their natures was somewhat lowered by their acceptance of the little recompense for their kindness which she gave them.

CHAP.

CHAPTER IV.

THOUGH Catherine's disorder was declared to have taken a favourable turn at the end of four days, it left her so weak and languid, and with such a complaint in her eyelids, that it was a full week before she could bear the light: and a note from Lucy Merle by the two-penny post, the only sure conveyance as Lucy now thought, remained unopened till Catherine was alone with Norris, and could desire her to read the contents.

“ I think, as well as I can now see,” said Catherine, “ that note is from my friend Lucy: I wondered I had neither heard from her nor seen her during my illness; but I dare say she has often called or sent to inquire concerning me.”

“ That she has indeed, poor thing!”
replied

replied Norris; "and if she had been permitted, she would have watched by you day and night."

"Permitted! and who forbade her?" asked Catherine.

"Oh! one who likes to thwart every body," said Norris: "but I beg pardon, Miss Shirley; and I dare say the young lady will tell you all about it in her note."

Catherine made no more inquiries; for she saw very clearly that her aunt was the person to whom Norris alluded: but she begged the affectionate old woman to read Lucy's note aloud. She did so; and saw with great satisfaction that her friend contented herself with simply stating facts, and made no angry comment whatever on Mrs. Baynton's conduct, though she could not help saying that the servants' great kindness and sympathy made her

her some amends for unkindness elsewhere.

“I hope she was equally guarded in what she said to my aunt,” thought Catherine. Then, as she was unable to write, she begged Norris to go to Mrs. Merle’s, and tell her and Lucy, that as soon as she was well enough to go out, she would call on them according to her original appointment.

At the end of two days more Catherine was able to take her seat at the breakfast table, and for the first time officiated there as the future mistress of the family. At first, when the general and Catherine beheld each other clad in deep mourning,—and recollected not only why they were so clad, but why they were thus united,—they both felt it difficult to control the bitterness of their emotions. Nor could the general recover himself as quickly

quickly as Catherine did; because her likeness to her father was so striking, that he was too forcibly reminded of what he had lost, to feel sufficiently grateful for what remained to cheer him.

But by the time breakfast was over the general was able to look at her face with composure, to listen with delight to the impressive tones of her voice, and to gaze with admiring pride on the symmetry of her commanding figure, and the consummate beauty of her hands—"If," thought he, "the mind and temper be equal to the person, she is indeed an angel."

Soon after breakfast Lord Shirley was announced. The earl had never seen Catherine since the night of her first introduction, and he was agreeably surprised to find the forlorn-looking girl of that night, transformed into an elegant young woman. He, too, was again forcibly struck with the likeness to her father,

VOL. I.

E

and

and could not help distressing Catherine by the earnestness with which he regarded her. The servant now came in to say that the carriage was ready which was to convey Miss Shirley to Mrs. Merle's.

"Under my circumstances, my dear," said the general, "I do not think it would be right for me to accompany you to Mrs. Merle's; and I have not urged her coming hither, because you must have a good many things probably to collect together and bring away, and this no one could do but yourself. Still, you shall not go alone. I dare not ask my sister to accompany you, but you may take Norris."

"Oh! I should like Norris to go with me better than any one," cried Catherine eagerly.

"And with Mrs. Norris for a chaperone might not I venture to accompany Miss Shirley?" said Lord Shirley.

"Aye, by all means," cried the general, looking

looking pleased at this mark of respect to his grand-daughter.

But Catherine, though she did not like to refuse the offer, earnestly wished it had not been made, as she would have preferred a tête-à-tête with Norris. However, she bowed her assent to the earl's proposal, and was preparing to go, having previously summoned Norris, when the general asked her if she had no cloak, or shawl; and hearing she had not, and that her mourning pelisse was not come home, he declared she should not go out unless his sister would lend her some warm mantle. But after a pause he said, "I have it! Stay here till I come down again."

During his absence Mrs. Baynton came in, and, nodding her head to Catherine, coldly said she was glad to see her down stairs again.

Catherine tried to answer very kindly; but her answer, whether kind or otherwise,

wise, was lost on her aunt, as she had extended her hand in friendship to her dear lord, the head of her house, and, in her affectionate greetings to him, wholly disregarded, if she did not entirely forget, poor Catherine. But she was made fully sensible of her presence, when the general returned bringing in his hand a very handsome black velvet pelisse full-trimmed with lace.

As soon as she saw it, Mrs. Baynton changed colour, and exclaimed "Bless me, general! what can you be going to do with that pelisse?"

"Give it to Miss Shirley," coolly replied the general.

"Give it to her! You never would give it to me; and I am sure it will not fit her, she is much too big for it; for my sister, your wife for whom it was made, was a beautiful, slender shape."

"So is your great-niece, my granddaughter,"

daughter," answered the general; "and surely I may give my poor wife's things to whom I please."

"Mighty fine!" while Lord Shirley, who had before heard this pelisse (which the general's love of his wife, who had bought it just before her death, had made him unwilling to part with,) the subject of contention, could not help enjoying this mortification to the vanity and rapacity of Mrs. Baynton. But Catherine, generously distressed at seeing the pain she occasioned, declared it was too good for her to wear, and begged the general to consider what he was doing.

"I have considered, and therefore I act: for who so proper to wear my wife's things as my son's child? So put it on, Miss Shirley, and say no more about it."

Catherine obeyed, and "It fits her as if it was made for her!" exclaimed the delighted general, "does it not, Lionel?"

Lord

Lord Shirley readily assented ; but Mrs. Baynton declared it to be so tight that she expected the seams would burst every moment.

Catherine said nothing ; nor indeed, to the surprise and admiration of Lord Shirley, did she seem elated by the consciousness of wearing a dress far more magnificent than she had ever worn ; nor was her motion impeded, or her manner altered in any respect. “ A common-minded girl,” thought Lord Shirley, “ would have looked at herself over and over again, and been full of thanks and expressions of admiration on such an occasion. Nor does she seem at all gratified at her triumph over her unkind aunt. Where there is so much dignified self possession, there must be some mind.”

“ But how absurd for Miss Shirley in deep mourning to go out in a pelisse trimmed with lace!” cried Mrs. Baynton.

“ Surely

“ Surely she might stay at home till the things proper for her to wear are ready ! And pray whither is Miss Shirley going ? ”

“ To Mrs. Merle’s ! ”

“ Only to Mrs. Merle’s ! O then it does not signify what she wears, if I may judge of the mother’s manners by the daughter’s ; for that young person seems to me a most low-lived creature, and no better than a female jacobin ; and she really insinuated that you and I, brother, were two hard-hearted aristocrats. ”

“ I am afraid, sister, the young lady spoke the truth ; and if this is the only proof of her jacobinism, I see no ground for the charge. ”

“ I can only say, General Shirley, that if you allow your grand-daughter to keep such company, you will see cause to repent it. But you are prejudiced against every thing that I observe, therefore I shall say no more : but this Miss Merle is not fit company for Miss Shirley. ”

So

So saying she left the room; while Catherine tremblingly awaited interrogatories from the general relative to her friend, which she knew she could not answer at all to his satisfaction, as she felt quite assured that Lucy Merle had spoken the words attributed to her, and almost in the very spirit which Mrs. Baynton suspected. But the general, seeing she was distressed, did not press the subject further. Then kindly and earnestly desiring her not to stay too long, as he did not know how to part with her, he gave her hand to Lord Shirley, and in a few moments accompanied by Norris they were on their way to Great George Street.

Lord Shirley (though by no means a vain man) would have been mortified had he known how little his kindness in accompanying Catherine to *one* Mrs. Merle's was appreciated by his young relation. She was told that Lord Shirley was her cousin, and he paid her the proper

proper attention of one. It was a thing of course, and so was attention to Catherine Shirley from all young men whom she had as yet seen; and she was too free from any feeling of worship for rank, to feel peculiarly grateful for common civility from a lord. But Lord Shirley was a little vexed to find that, instead of entering into conversation with him, she fell into a reverie, out of which she started only to address Norris: but, then, what she said showed such goodness of heart that his self-love forgot its murmurs.

“I am resolved, dear nurse,” said Catherine, (the name she had been used to give to Norris,) “I am resolved to take the head of the table only *to-day*, to show my obedience to my grandfather’s will, and my grateful sense of the honour he kindly intends to do me; but after to-day I will beg and entreat him to let my aunt fill the place as usual.”

E 5

“Dear

"Dear me! why so, Miss Catherine?"

"Because I cannot but feel for Mrs. Baynton's mortification."

"She is such an un-amiable person, I would have her mortified," said Mrs. Norris: "but I beg your pardon, my lord, for speaking so of your relation."

"And my pardon too, I hope, Norris, for she is my aunt. But indeed I pity her. We all love power; therefore we none of us like to resign it. I suspect that *voluntary* abdication has been often repented of," she added (turning towards Lord Shirley as she spoke, as if conscious her terms might not be understood by her companion), "and this abdication is *not* voluntary. Besides, Mrs. Baynton is a much more proper person to regulate the family and sit at the head of the table than I am."

"You must do as you please, Miss Shirley," cried Norris: "but I am sure she does not deserve any consideration from
you,

you, for I am confident she cannot abide you."

"Nor ever will, if I am always to be the means of mortification to her. My lord, if the general wishes his sister to live on good terms with me, and to like me, is he right in thus inflicting wounds on her self-love through me?"

"Certainly not," replied Lord Shirley. But he could say no more; for, as the carriage turned into George Street, poor Catherine, recollecting when she saw the house of Mrs. Merle the feelings which impelled her from it, to meet (as she now found) a home and a second parent, felt her long-suspended emotion recur in full force; and throwing herself on Mrs. Norris's bosom, she sobbed convulsively and aloud.

When they stopped at the door, Lord Shirley took her passive hand, and told her they were arrived, and her friends
E 5
waiting

waiting at the door to receive her. Catherine instantly started up; and as soon as the door was open, she did not wait for Lord Shirley's assistance; but, springing out alone she was in a moment hanging on the arm of the agitated Lucy, and in another moment had disappeared with her into her own chamber.

Catherine forgot, in the hurry of the moment, to introduce her noble companion; but Norris had recollection enough to tell Mrs. Merle that Catherine's cousin Lord Shirley had kindly chosen to accompany her.

"Oh! that's a lord, is it?" said Mrs. Merle, hiding her pleasure at having such a visitor, under a sort of contemptuous smile as she whispered Mrs. Norris; while Norris, knowing her own place, told Mrs. Merle she would wait her young lady's further orders in the kitchen, and instantly left the room.

"Pray

“ Pray sit down, my lord,” said Mrs. Merle ; “ though we are plain folk, and not used to such company ; but here’s a chair that is clean at least.” And Lord Shirley, almost abashed by her earnest and inquisitive gaze, sat down. “ It is cold weather, my lord, and coals are so dear one can hardly afford to buy them ; and indeed so is every thing else. It does not signify to such as you, my lord, who live on the fat of the land ; but we poor folks find it a dear country to live in, and I am sure I for one shall not rest till I get out of it.”

“ If you are dissatisfied with your own country, madam, you will be quite right in leaving it,” gravely replied Lord Shirley.

“ Pray, my lord, is there any news ?”

“ No public news, I believe, madam, since the late glorious engagement.”

“ Oh ! What after all is taking a few ships ? Will it bring down the taxes, and pay

debt? Answer me that,

madam, I am no poli-

form a part of our le-

am, I *rarely* talk politics
er to ladies."

rigible Mrs. Merle went
not a lady, my lord; I
, my lord; and there is
e, I take it, between a
y."

I fancy," replied Lord
ng.

ally, my lord, between
od will all this powder
e nation at large?—And

I suppose we shall have
ers; and I am sure we
ose gentry already."

wed, and smiled. But,
think-

thinking it his
lord, she *continues*
there was one *thing*
cation; and that
ance or friend should
rarily, by seeing her
guest; and her pride, b
ran the rig on his lordsh
"Yes, my lord; your
good sort of a gentleman
ought I know to the contra
she thought was being very
civil to him); but, dear me!
do so many do?—There is some
(I do not remember great folks
who is said to have said, she coul
spit out of a window without spi
lord."

"Indeed, madam!" cried I
ley; "it is a pity this great
sympathizing friend on this
should be restrained by any co

thinking it fine fun to speak her mind to a lord, she continued nothing daunted, though there was one thing wanting to her gratification ; and that was, that an acquaintance or friend should drop in to flatter her vanity, by seeing her with a lord for her guest ; and her pride, by hearing how she *ran the rig* on his lordship.

“ Yes, my lord ; your lordship’s a very good sort of a gentleman yourself, for aught I know to the contrary (and that she thought was being very genteel and civil to him) ; but, dear me ! what good do so *many* do ? — There is some great lady (I do not remember great folks’ names) who is said to have said, she could not now spit out of a window without spitting on a lord.”

“ Indeed, madam ! ” cried Lord Shirley ; “ it is a pity this great lady, your sympathizing friend on this subject, should be restrained by any consideration from

from indulging in the delicate custom you mention."

"My friend ! my lord ?—No, indeed ; I have no friends among great folks—I am not so"—fond of them, she was going to add, but she had politeness enough to check herself ;—"and I suppose the lady did not mean *literally* that she used to spit."

"I hope not, madam, for the sake of the privileged orders to which you say she belongs."

Mrs. Merle was going to say something very shrewd and severe, in her opinion, and probably on the privileged orders, as she was looking arch and winking her eye, when the door opened, and Catherine entered, followed by Lucy Merle. Lucy's face was so disfigured by crying, that Lord Shirley, though struck with the graceful dignity of her tall figure, so unlike the vulgarity of the mother's appearance, could

could not form any judgement whether she was handsome or not.

But though Lord Shirley's curiosity to know with what sort of women Catherine had been associating, had thus been amply gratified during his long tête-à-tête with Mrs. Merle, still he was delighted at her return ; and it was with no small satisfaction he saw her enter the room, laden with a small cabinet which had been her father's, and was therefore now her own. In this cabinet she knew that he kept his most precious letters, &c. ; and on a sealed paper in one of the unlocked drawers was written—" *To be opened, in case of my death, by my beloved daughter, Catherine Shirley.*" Catherine had consequently opened the paper, and found that it contained the key of the fastened drawers. The contemplation of the melancholy task which awaited her in looking over these papers, had so completely depressed and absorbed her, that she scarcely heard Mrs.

Merle's

Merle's congratulations, or her exclamations of admiration at the beauty of her pelisse ; nor had she observed her while she stroked the velvet, examined the lace, and, patting it down, exclaimed " Well, dear Miss Shirley, now you are dressed as you ought to be."

" My lord," said Catherine, abruptly turning to Lord Shirley, " you know my grandfather better than I do: do you think he would object to Lucy Merle's coming to me for two or three days, if her mother would give leave?"

" Which I would do most readily," answered Mrs. Merle ; " for I know the girl will do nothing but mope when you are gone."

" Yes, certainly," replied Lord Shirley. " Why should you think he would not?"

" Because I was afraid that he might be hurt at my seeming to give so decided a preference to my old associates."

" But can any thing be more natural?"

" No.

"No.—Still might it not give the general unnecessary pain, by reminding him why he and I are as yet strangers to each other, and those affections bestowed on friends which ought to have belonged to relations?"

"I honour the kindness which influences you, dear Miss Shirley," said the earl; "but I think your fear of reminding the general unnecessary. Besides, surely you have an undoubted right on all occasions to consult your own wishes, and to think of yourself first."

"But I was taught never to think of myself first," replied Catherine with quickness.

"Then you were well and singularly taught," returned Lord Shirley—while Catherine's uplifted eye seemed to direct its grateful appeal to the spirits of her lost parents.

"It was my consciousness," she continued, "how eagerly I desired Lucy Merle's company,

company, that made me fear my wishes might blind me improperly to the comfort of another : but you think I may risk it, spite of my aunt's prejudices. Indeed I have an excuse, if one be necessary—Lucy would assist me in making the rest of my mourning."

"No: that will not be suffered, I am sure, Miss Shirley," he hastily replied; "the first and most fashionable mantua-maker must be employed for that purpose."

"My lord, I make all my own things."

"And it was a virtue in you so to do when your means of expenditure were small; but now, in the heiress of General Shirley, such a saving would be a vice."

"What, my lord! if by such saving I enable myself to give more to those who want?"

"But you will now be able to afford to give trades-people their just employments, and relieve distress too."

"Still you must allow, that if I had the
the

the wealth of Croesus, and I could by means of a little industrious œconomy increase my power to do good, I ought to do it."

"But, in this case, you seem to forget that in encouraging the industry of an industrious mantua-maker you do good! Have you no feeling for the profits deserved by working trades-people? Can you feel only for the indigent?"

"My lord," replied Catherine thoughtfully, but respectfully, "I must consider this subject before I reply. I wish to act right; but it must be according to my own convictions, when I shall have thoroughly weighed the suggestions of those wiser than myself. For let me assure you, that I shall always cheerfully give up a habit to my grandfather's wishes, but a principle never But I am trespassing greatly on your time and patience," she added. Then having told Lucy she should hear

hear from her in an hour or two, she kissed her most affectionately ; while Lucy was forced to turn away to hide her strong emotion. She then gracefully approached Mrs. Merle, and, kissing her cheek, said, —“ Though you were wrong, very wrong, in persisting as you did the other night, yet I am sorry I occasioned you such alarm ; but the phrensy of the moment must be my excuse—and—”

“ O dear ! O dear ! ” vociferated Mrs. Merle, sobbing violently—“ I know I was wrong, very wrong,—but it was all along of my temper, which is, you know, Miss Shirley, none of the best in the world ; and no one but such a sweet-tempered creature as you could have borne it so well.”

“ Don’t talk thus,” said Catherine gently. “ I shall never forget the safe and respectable protection you have afforded me, nor your claims on me from the connexion with my poor mother. Remember,

member, you will always find a friend in me." Here her voice faltered; and once more saluting the sobbing Mrs. Merle, she wrung Lucy's hand, and, assisted by Lord Shirley, followed Mrs. Norris into the carriage.

Nearly the whole way to New-Street Catherine covered her face in her handkerchief, overcome by the thought of having for ever left that home where she last saw her father and received the last token of his affection; till recollecting that this was indeed one of those selfish indulgences which she had declared against, she apologized to Lord Shirley for her silence, and tried to talk. But the earl was not more disposed to converse than she was, for he was thinking over all he had seen and heard of Catherine during the morning. He had himself witnessed her candour and generosity relative to her aunt; and he had heard the self-condemned

demned Mrs. Merle declare, that no temper but one as sweet as Catherine's could have borne with the acidity of hers.

So far so good.—Still he was not quite satisfied with all that had passed. In the first place, he had found Mrs. Merle a vulgar, ignorant, prejudiced and forward woman; and who can touch pitch without being defiled? Surely not such a young creature as Catherine Shirley! In the next place, her excessive intimacy with Lucy Merle was not consistent, he thought, with the proper pride of a girl of family. And, in the third place, had not the speech concerning voluntary abdication an air of pedantry?—and had not the declaration, that though she would give up a habit, she would not give up a principle, to oblige General Shirley, an appearance of decision and free-will neither amiable nor proper in so young a woman? But, after all, were not the lips that thus spoke, the
most

most beautiful lips possible? And was not the head, which was slightly thrown back as if in conscious loftiness of mind, as she uttered her determination, more gracefully set on than any one he had ever seen? And, in short, taking her physical and her moral qualities together, was not his new-found relative, Catherine Shirley, a very uncommon and interesting being? And had she not strongly excited his curiosity to know still more of her? But did she feel any apparent curiosity to know more of him?—of him, the desire of all female hearts and the delight of all female eyes, as his flatterers had called him?

No,—his vanity could not deceive him on that score. He saw that old Norris had much greater charms for her than he had; and he was sure that, if she were sitting between her and Lucy Merle, he would almost have been unheeded by her.—Yet Lord Shirley was reckoned and perhaps,

VOL. I.

F

was,

was, the handsomest and most agreeable man of the day.

But while Catherine is gone to dress for dinner, and, probably, to look over some of the contents of the cabinet ; and while Lord Shirley is returned home for the former purpose, before he takes his seat at the general's table—it may be proper for me to give some account of Captain Shirley—of his amiable wife—and of the events which led our heroine under the care of Mrs. Merle.

CHAP.

CHAPTER V.

CAPTAIN SHIRLEY was the only child of General Shirley, by a lady born of noble English parents whom distressed circumstances had occasioned to emigrate to America; and there General Shirley, when a lieutenant in the army, fell in love with and married her.

Captain Shirley, his only child by that marriage, was devoted to his profession, and felt that well-principled love for it which leads a man to fit himself to be an ornament to it by the study of naval tactics. His father had wished him to be a soldier; but finding his inclinations fixed on the sea, he forbore to oppose them; and the young William became a navy officer.

At this time the general, then only Co-
F 2
lonel

lonel Shirley, was constantly going to different quarters with his regiment, consequently had no house in London. Captain Shirley, therefore, then only a lieutenant, whenever he was obliged to visit the metropolis, was forced to go to lodgings. The lodgings to which he always went were kept by a respectable person, the widow of a reputable shopkeeper in Oxford Street, of the name of Morland, who was glad to add to her little income by letting part of the very excellent house which her husband possessed, and left her, in Sackville Street, Piccadilly. Mrs. Morland had an only daughter, the last surviving child of seven; and when William Shirley first became her lodger, Catherine Morland was only fourteen, and he considered her merely in the light of an agreeable and attentive child; but the next time he returned from a cruise, he beheld her, though in age only sixteen, matured

matured into a fine lovely woman, in appearance approaching twenty.

Catherine Morland, unconscious of the difference in her person, or rather unconscious that the difference ought to make any change in her behaviour, came forward to meet her kind friend with her usual affectionate familiarity; but a conscious feeling, of which honour perhaps was the unconscious impulse, prompted William Shirley to return her eager welcome with kindness, but full of restraining respect. However, the kindness was wholly lost on the astonished and mortified girl, and the respect or coldness, as she termed it, was all that she observed; and hastily leaving the room, she retired to weep over the altered manner, and consequently altered feelings, of her dear William Shirley. But Mrs. Morland saw in him no change: his manner to her was as kind as ever,—still she thought him pensive and
absent:

absent : and after a long reverie he suddenly exclaimed, " How Catherine is grown ! She is now quite a woman—aye, and a very lovely young woman too !—Mrs. Morland, Mrs. Morland ! you must not keep a lodging-house ! "

The poor woman looked aghast at these alarming words ; and before she recovered herself William Shirley, pressing her hand affectionately, told her he would talk further to her on that subject, a subject he had much at heart, and left the house.

" What is the matter, my dear child ? " said Mrs. Morland, on seeing Catherine enter the room with her eyes swollen with tears.

" O nothing, mamma ; only—only I think Mr. Shirley is—is very odd. "

" I think so too, my dear, " replied her mother thoughtfully ; " but I dare say when he comes back again he will explain all. "

" Explain !

“ Explain! What! Explain why he looked so coldly, and took my hand so coldly when I ran up to him so glad so *very* glad to see him! How can he explain that, I wonder?”

Her mother sighed, but said nothing; and felt very impatient for Mr. Shirley's return. But that return was delayed so long that Mrs. Morland insisted on Catherine's going to bed, and, dismissing the maid, sat up as usual herself.

During his walks in the morning, and his solitary dinner that afternoon, William Shirley had been thinking on the danger which would be incurred by so fine a girl as Catherine Morland, if exposed to the addresses of her mother's lodgers. Of his own honour he felt secure; but some man equally honourable in appearance as himself might gain her unsuspecting heart, and take an unworthy if not criminal advantage of it: he therefore

fore resolved to talk very seriously to the mother, and convince her that she must either take some other method of increasing her income, or send Catherine out in some situation to gain her own livelihood. Accordingly, when he returned home and found Mrs. Morland alone, he entered very fully into the subject ; and the grateful and alarmed parent resolved that she would give Catherine every advantage in her power to qualify her for a governess in a private family, or an assistant-teacher in a boarding-school.

“ It will cost a great deal of money to do that,” said William Shirley thoughtfully.

“ Indeed it will,” replied Mrs. Morland ; “ but I can sell out some of my little property in the funds.”

“ You shall do no such thing,” said Shirley : “ I have a legacy of a few hundreds to receive, and part of it cannot be employed

employed better than in aiding a good and affectionate parent in preserving her daughter from danger, and giving her the means of independence. Whenever you or Catherine are rich, you shall repay me with interest."

It was long that night before the joyfully agitated mother could close her tearful eyes, or cease her earnest prayers for blessings on the head of her young benefactor; while he was blessed already in the sweetly soothing consciousness of having served two, and perhaps saved one deserving fellow-creature.

When the mother met her daughter in the morning, she caught her in her arms, and wept over her for some minutes without speaking; and to the alarmed Catherine's inquiries she only answered—"O that excellent young man! that blessed William Shirley!"

At length, however, she explained herself

self to the blushing Catherine; who, though flattered to think she was judged so attractive by Shirley as to be in danger of being too much admired, felt indignant that he should suppose her principles could be corrupted, and afflicted to see that he could so gladly and readily afford her the means to leave the house which he so often inhabited : but at last she learnt to appreciate justly the value of his advice and his bounty. And when he returned, her manner was as respectful, and, she flattered herself, as cold as his own.

This change induced a greater cordiality of manner in him ; and he contrived to excuse the way in which he met her, and which he saw had wounded her pride, by attributing it to an involuntary feeling of respect and surprise at seeing the person whom he had left a child suddenly grown into a tall woman : and Catherine began
to

to fancy that the manner so wounding to her feelings was gratifying to her vanity.

Every thing was soon arranged for the education of Catherine for a teacher. Her fine and ductile voice was put under the tuition of a first-rate master, and another was hired to teach her thorough-bass and to understand music as a science. Besides, she also learnt French and Italian, and had a female opera-dancer to give her the best instructions in dancing and walking. Shirley learnt Italian at the same time she did; and the emulation thus excited in Catherine made her much quicker in learning Italian than in perfecting herself in French: and Shirley every day congratulated himself on having been the means of cultivating the talents of a being so eminently endowed.

In about nine months Shirley was forced to go to sea again, and Catherine's exertions

exertions flagged. But recollecting that when he returned he would expect to find she had made a great progress in all her accomplishments, she resumed her labours : and when she saw him again he was indeed gratified by the improvement which she had made.

“ But it is time,” said Shirley, “ that you should seek for a situation.”

“ So my mother says,” replied Catherine turning very pale : “ but—”

“ But you do not think so.”

“ No, I think I may dismiss my masters ; but I wish to practise some months longer at home.”

These months Shirley knew he should pass in the house, and he suspected that this, unknown to herself, was the true reason of Catherine’s desired delay. Perhaps his ‘ wish was father to the thought,’ and William Shirley feared so too :—for it was so *natural* that a young man should
love

love an accomplished girl who owed her accomplishments to him. Still, whatever he felt, he resolved to confine it all to his own bosom; for his own pride of birth and that of his father forbade him to make Catherine Morland his wife, and his own sense of honour equally forbade him to endeavour, or even wish, to seduce that innocence himself, which he had so laudably laboured to preserve from the attacks of others.

“I will immediately inquire for a situation for her,” said he to himself. And having succeeded in his endeavours, that day three months was fixed on for Catherine Morland’s quitting the maternal roof, and trying her fortune under the roof of a stranger. In the meanwhile Shirley insisted on Catherine’s masters being continued, and he resumed his study of the Italian with her.

To the dreaded time of Catherine’s departure

parture there was now only two months ; and as he was so soon to see her no more, or only for a few hours in a twelvemonth perhaps, William Shirley thought there could be no danger either to him or her, if he staid at home as much as possible to enjoy her society, and assist her, when her masters were gone, in going over the lessons which they left. The consequence was, forced gaiety when they met before a third person, reserve and silence when they chanced to be alone ; and the colour evidently became faint on the once florid cheek and ruby lip of Catherine Morland. Still she laughed, she danced, she sung, she played ; and every one but her mother and William Shirley believed her gaiety real : sometimes, indeed, the latter felt piqued at her self-command, and almost feared that her good spirits were not feigned.

“ However,” thought he, “ the dreaded moment will soon come, and the trial will be

be over;—we shall part, and time and absence will restore us both to our senses; if indeed, as I now begin to doubt, her heart shares the feelings of mine.”

Catherine’s mother saw her daughter’s struggles, and felt for them; but very judiciously endeavoured to give her courage to proceed in them, by laughing at the folly of love-sick girls, and describing William Shirley as having once declared he should despise a woman whose heart surrendered itself without long and earnest wooing.

“He shall not despise me,” said she mentally: and so strenuous were her subsequent efforts to conceal her feelings, that Shirley was completely deceived, and believed that he alone would be the sufferer in the approaching separation. This conviction had a visible effect on his temper: he could not in his heart acquit Catherine of ingratitude; and she too, deceived in her
turn,

turn, thought it impossible a man could love the woman to whom he occasionally spoke so pettishly and unkindly.

The day of separation at length arrived; and during the breakfast meal, which Shirley took that day with Catherine and her mother, out of compliment to the former, he could not sit still a moment, but was always going in and out of the room to find up all his books, and the things belonging to him; some of which, he insisted upon it, a servant girl who was going away that day must have purloined.

“How strange!” thought Catherine, “that such trifles should have such power to vex him, when I am going away! Oh! if he cared for me at all, could he thus be susceptible of petty vexations!”

The coach now drove up which was to convey Catherine to the place of her destination; and while it was loading with her trunks, Shirley came into the room in
great

great agitation, declaring he had lost a pocket-comb, and he was sure the girl had taken it.

“Dear me!” said Mrs. Morland, “surely it was not worth taking!”

“No, it was worth nothing to any body but me; and I would not have parted with it for worlds, for it was my poor mother’s gift; and though it had few teeth remaining in it, I valued it beyond any of my possessions! My handkerchiefs and shirts the girl was welcome to, but this—”

“I will go and see for it myself,” said Mrs. Morland; “perhaps it is dropped down somewhere.”

When alone with Catherine, Shirley still kept on inveighing against the girl, and declared he would tax her with the theft, and, if she denied it, get a warrant and take her to Bow Street. At this moment his eye glanced towards Catherine, and he beheld her, nearly fainting, grasp at a chair

a chair for support; and running towards her, he clasped her in his arms, and leaned her pale cheek against his shoulder.

"Mr. Shirley," said she in a faint voice, "promise me not to say any thing to the poor girl; for I'll confess all, rather than let another suffer for my fault." Here she paused; while Shirley, pleased yet pained, awaited the confession which his beating heart anticipated.

"I—I took the comb," resumed Catherine hiding her face with her hand, as she forced herself from the encircling arm of Shirley.

"You! Catherine?"

"Yes, I—it was such a poor old comb, that I, who knew not its intrinsic value, thought you would not miss or care for it. And—and it was a memorial of you—and now only say you don't despise me, and I shall depart in peace."

"Depart!" cried Shirley, no longer master

master of himself, "No, Catherine, no; never shall we be parted more! While I thought I suffered alone, I could be silent and self-subdued; but now that I see our separation will torture you also,—O! Catherine!" Here he caught the agitated girl to his bosom.—To be brief, the coach was dismissed, the lady informed that Miss Morland's mother could not part with her: and, spite of his love for his father, and his pride of birth, in one month from the day on which he found himself beloved, William Shirley received at Paddington church (to which village Catherine and her mother removed) the hand of the woman whom he loved dearer than his own life.

Soon after their marriage Shirley was summoned to his ship, of which in a few months after he returned the master and commander. But his joy at this rise, was damped by his wife's giving birth to a son
which

which died a few weeks after. Nor could he be at times unconscious how terribly he had blasted his father's hopes, by marrying as he had done ; for the general had lately become possessor of a very large fortune, and he himself would be, on the death of a relation who had no children, heir to a barony : but, though conscious that every day that he continued to conceal his fault increased its magnitude, he could not prevail on himself to write to his father and implore his forgiveness : nor could Mrs. Shirley herself urge him to a step which might draw down on him the malediction of a father, and lead him in the bitterness of his remorse to hate her as the cause of his disobedience. Thus year after year wore away ; while Mrs. Shirley, though conscious she was an innocent wife, appeared to her neighbours to be a contented mistress : and her respectable mother, in the village where they lived, was looked upon

upon in no better light than the complaisant friend of her daughter.

It was not often, however, that Shirley, when become a post-captain, visited them in the country: he usually summoned them to town, as the metropolis was better for the purposes of concealment than a village.

But when Catherine his daughter had reached the age of thirteen, he was so struck with her beauty, that with all a parent's pride he longed to present her to his father, and introduce his child into that rank of life to which she was born. A proud and weak fear lest the beauty of his wife should not be thought sufficient to excuse his having married a woman so inferior to himself in birth, was one reason why he had so long kept his marriage concealed: for though to his partial eye she appeared, if not the handsomest, the most attractive woman he had ever seen; and though in talents, variety
of

of accomplishments, and in virtues, he had never seen her equal, he dreaded lest others should not see her with the same eyes; and he also dreaded that the implied disappointment of his father and friends in her charms and merits should operate on himself to the disadvantage of his wife.

He had once resolved to disclose his secret to his amiable cousin Lord Shirley, just then become the arbiter of fashions, whose word was law in all decisions relative to female beauty. But the terror lest, when he presented his wife to him, he should read surprise and disappointment in his eye, still kept him silent; till parental pride came in aid of filial duty and repentant filial affection; and he wrote a letter to the general, owning his marriage, and earnestly and humbly imploring leave to present to him an adored wife and a most lovely daughter.

It was not only the action itself, but the long

long concealment of it, which enraged the general; and he wrote a letter which expressed only too well the bitterness of his soul. His son received it as he ought, and wrote again and again in humble terms to deprecate his wrath; and the general's heart softened towards him: but the representations of his proud second wife and prouder sister made him still vindictive towards Mrs. Shirley; and he offered to receive him and his child into his presence and his favour, but vowed never to see or acknowledge the woman who had duped him into a disgraceful marriage.

“This is conclusive!” cried Shirley in a transport of rage, and throwing the letter into the lap of his wife, “and he has no more a son. What! does he think me void of affection and of honour—aye, and of intellect and feeling! Does he think that I could have loved a woman capable of duping

duping me into marriage! If he were not my father, I would—”

“But he is your father, dearest William,” cried Catherine, “and we have offended him; therefore it is right that we should humble ourselves before him.”

“We have done so; but never shall we do so again, my Catherine! No, I will let this haughty General Shirley know, that I am prouder of my wife and of her virtues, than of all the boasted race of ancestors on whose account I am commanded to be a villain!”

“Oh, my kind, my generous love!” cried his grateful wife.

“Generous! Why, Catherine, do you think I have any merit in not resigning you?”

Let this suffice to show the faithful and devoted love which Shirley felt for his wife. Let it also account for his subsequent

quent conduct, when the sudden death of her mother, and the self-upbraidings of her heart for having been the means of estranging her husband from his father, preyed incessantly upon her spirits, and brought on a decline to which in early life she had discovered a tendency.

I will not attempt to paint the agony with which Shirley watched beside her fevered pillow, and viewed the gradual progress of decay. But to her the consciousness of approaching death was cheered by the hope that her death would restore the son to the father.

“ Shirley,” she cried, “ I trust that I have made our child all the amends I could for having given her a mother so humbly born:—I could not give her noble blood, but I have given her I trust noble sentiments, and just principles of action ; for I have taught her to own no arbiter on earth but her own conscience, strengthened
VOL. I. G. and

and enlightened by faith and prayer, together with a firm reliance on the merits of her Redeemer, and the goodness of her Creator."

"You have done still more," replied Shirley in a faltering voice; "you have given her your own spotless example.—But must I lose you!—No, no, it cannot, shall not be."

"It will—it must—" she replied in a faint and hurried tone: "but I have one great consolation in dying; namely, the assurance that with me all obstacles to your reconciliation with your father will be at an end. Yes, when I am gone he will forgive you."—As she feebly uttered this, a sweet smile played upon her lips, and in another instant her distracted husband was convinced that these words and that smile were her last.

Need I paint the anguish of the husband and the daughter?—But it is necessary

cessary that I should describe the effect so different to what she intended they should have—which her last words and wishes had on the heart of her husband. For, though Shirley had witnessed and even joined in the last rites of religion when administered to his dying wife,—of that religion which teaches forgiveness of injuries as indispensable and necessary to our own forgiveness,—still, such was the perverted nature of his sorrow, that he had no relief but in venting it in execrations of his father's cruelty, and in resolutions *never* to forgive it.

“No—” he delighted to exclaim, “the father who rejected *her*, shall never have the comfort of receiving *me*; and I shall have pleasure in rejecting with disdain the tardy and solitary forgiveness which he will no doubt offer me.”

He did not long expect it in vain. The general, as soon as he saw the death of

Mrs. Shirley in the paper, wrote a letter blotted with tears to his son, conjuring him to hasten to him with his daughter, and take up his future abode at his house.

—It was then with a savage grief and an indulgence of very bitter feelings that William Shirley sat down to write to his father, rejecting for ever all terms of reconciliation with him, and declaring that, when he disdained to receive his angel-wife, he for ever deprived himself of his son.

This duty to the memory of his wife (as he called it) accomplished, he consigned his daughter to the care of an odd-tempered but respectable woman, whose mother was the daughter of Morland's father-in-law by a first marriage. This woman was Mrs. Merle, to whose husband Shirley had lent considerable sums of money, without even a prospect of regaining them.

But Captain Shirley knew that, now
her

her husband was dead, in Mrs. Merle, his daughter would find at least a watchful guardian; and as every one who had known, lived, or been connected with his wife, had a charm for him, Shirley felt his preference of Mrs. Merle as his child's guardian grow stronger every hour. Besides, he knew that Mrs. Merle and Lucy were struggling with undeserved indigence, the result of Mr. Merle's imprudence; and though he had suffered considerably by the father and the husband, his generous heart yearned to benefit the daughter and the mother.

Captain Shirley had a small independent property, left him by an aunt, and he had some prize-money: but his means were not at all proportionate to his generous spirit; and when he placed Catherine under Mrs. Merle's care, it was with great difficulty he could allow her what

what he thought sufficient to enable them to reside in London, and Catherine enough to pay for her masters and her dress.— Still, it was necessary that Mrs. Merle should live in London, that Catherine might have the best masters; and having seen the former settled there, and his daughter under her protection, Captain Shirley set off on a ramble over the British isles: then, when tired of wandering, he returned to London, took an affectionate leave of Catherine, and volunteered on board a ship in the fleet.

Meanwhile such was Mrs. Merle's good management, and such the habits of industry and oeconomy which had been taught Catherine by her mother, that the want of money was never felt by either of them; and while Mrs. Merle contrived to save a few pounds every year to send to her husband in America, Catherine had always
a little

a little hoard for the wants of the deserving indigent, whom it was Lucy's care to find out, and make known to her richer friend.

We have already seen, that at the end of three years from the death of his wife, Captain Shirley fell with glory in the defence of his country. But I have now to relate, that his long-suppressed tenderness towards his father returned in all its original force, when orders for a general engagement the next day were issued, and he recollected that before that day's sun should set, he might be past giving or receiving forgiveness. The thought affected him even to tears: and giving way to all the native softness of his heart, he sat down and wrote the following letter to the general :—

“ MY DEAR, DEAR FATHER,

“ Orders are given for a general engagement to-morrow—and I, to whom
life

life, since the loss of her whom if you had known you must have loved, has been little better than a burthen, may be led perhaps by my feelings as well as my duty into the thickest of the battle, and I may fall before the fight is ended. Then, take my forgiveness, which till now I have so sturdily withheld. And Oh! grant me yours, I beseech you ;—first, for my disobedience ; secondly, for my late callousness to your affectionate advances! Oh! my father!—when one finds oneself perhaps on the very brink of eternity, and of final judgement, oneself, how poor, how weak, how wicked, appear all earthly enmities!—enmity towards a parent too! — Terrible idea!—and at this moment, at this thought, your kindnesses, your doting fondness, your care of me during a sickly infancy, and your indulgence to my riper years, all crowd to my remembrance, and my brow is covered

vered with drops of agony at the consciousness of the misery I have occasioned you!

“Forgive me—Oh! forgive me! and prove you do so, by taking to your home and to your heart my orphan girl! Inclosed is her address.

“You will find her worthy of the angel who bore her: and love her not the less for the resemblance she bears to me! If I fall, I have given orders for this to be forwarded to you. If I live, we shall meet again!

“Farewell! Farewell!

“Your repentant and affectionate

“WILLIAM SHIRLEY.”

CHAPTER VI.

BUT to return to the dinner at General Shirley's, for which Catherine and Lord Shirley were gone to prepare when I began the story of the general's unfortunate son.

The general, his sister, and Lord Shirley, were assembled in the dinner-room when Catherine made her appearance. Her afternoon-dress displayed the beauty of her form and of her arms to great advantage ; but her face was swollen even to disfigurement by recent and incessant crying ; and her every motion and gesture seemed to betray the abandonment of calm but settled sorrow.

The general's attention had hitherto been somewhat taken from himself by the
singular

singular introduction of Catherine to his knowledge, and by the activity of thought concerning her which that introduction had given birth to. But he now began to feel the languor of hopeless regret; and when he saw her grief-disfigured countenance, he felt only too forcibly that his son's death was as present to him as ever.

As soon as she saw him, she went up to him, and, throwing her arms affectionately round him, laid her head on his shoulder, while a tear trickled down her cheek. But recovering herself before the servant came to announce dinner, Catherine gracefully withdrew herself from the general's embrace, and curtsied coldly to her aunt, but still more coldly to the earl,—giving him at the same time a look that almost expressed aversion.

In the morning he had felt great mortification in being forced to own to himself

self that Catherine felt perfectly indifferent towards him. But if his interpretation of her look and manner in the evening was just, willingly would he have now exchanged her present feeling for that of indifference. Yet, how could he have offended her? And why so unusually kind to the general, and so unusually cold and haughty towards him? Whatever was the reason of this change, it gave him pain; and he was relieved, rather than distressed, when the general desired him to lead his sister, while he should follow with the new *maitresse de la maison*.

“Did you hear that?” whispered the deposed queen, as she leaned on the earl’s arm. “To be displaced by such a chit, too! What can she know of sitting at the head of a table?”

But Catherine, as if used to the situation, took her seat without any embarrassment, and helped and attended to her guests

guests with all the ease of a woman of fashion; except that, as usual, whenever she moved or spoke, a colour brilliant as the hue of carmine mounted from the bottom of her cheeks to the rest of her face, forming a beautiful and striking contrast to the usually transparent paleness of her face. But as soon as the emotion, from whatever cause, had subsided, her cheek lost its colour, and on her lips alone crimson held its unvarying station. In vain, during the meal, did Mrs. Baynton endeavour to discover a fault in the behaviour of Catherine, whether as a carver, a helper, or a president.

Lord Shirley was a no less attentive observer; and, had it not been for the constantly mantling blush before mentioned, his fastidiousness would have led him to pronounce her too much at her ease for her time of life; especially, too, as he was not a little piqued by the continued coldness

coldness and stateliness of her manner to him.—There was little eaten and nothing said during the meal. The general and Catherine had no appetite, from sorrow; the earl, from a mixture of alarm and pique; and Mrs. Baynton, from a violent fit of ill humour at being displaced by her niece, without having it in her power to declare that niece was unfit to succeed her.

Shortly after the dessert was served, Catherine asked her aunt if it would be agreeable to her to retire; and, having received a nod of assent, she rose; when a servant brought in a letter sealed, and delivered it to the general.

“That is my poor father’s hand,” exclaimed Catherine, glancing her eye over the letter: then, dreading to see the agony which she expected the sight of his lost son’s posthumous address to him would occasion her grandfather to experience, she

she hastily left the room, regardless that she walked before Mrs. Baynton.

This negligence was an affront not to be pardoned; and, instead of repairing with her niece into the sitting-room, the enraged lady went up into her own room, to complain to her complaisant abigail, how ill her new-found and conceited niece had behaved to her.

But Catherine scarcely noticed her absence; for she was too much engrossed by thinking what that letter contained. The increased affection in her manner to the general, was the consequence of reading his letters to her father, inviting him to come with his daughter and reside with him. The first letter failed to move her heart towards him, because it expressed no regret at having refused to see her mother; but the next letter, which her father in the paroxysm of his first feelings had

had never opened, but had deposited in the cabinet, called forth the tenderest pity towards the suffering parent ; for in that letter he execrated his past cruelty ; said he would give worlds to recall his daughter-in-law to life, and to receive her to his house and to his heart. And as Catherine felt assured that, if her father had read this letter, it would have had a conciliatory effect on his feelings, and would have led him perhaps to the presence of his father, the idea of the general as her mother's enemy faded gradually from her mind ; and when she next beheld his grief-worn countenance, she could not help hastening to him in the manner above described.

The cabinet contained also other reminiscence of both her parents, which had entirely subverted her newly assumed composure, and sent her down with every mark of sorrow in her appearance. She was

was still pacing the room, but in oppressive thought, wholly unconscious of the lapse of time, when the gentlemen entered; and she saw evident marks of deep emotion in the face of Lord Shirley.

The general endeavoured to speak, but could not. But on her offering to take the letter he held in his hand, he snatched it away from her, saying, "No; this is not for your eye *yet*, my love: it has nearly broken my heart, and could have no good effect on yours. See, it has been too much for poor Lionel there. Still it has been a cordial to my heart, as it proves how earnestly he wished you to be, in case of his decease, under my protection."

Catherine, though disappointed in not seeing the letter, acquiesced in the decision. "But why (thought she) should Lord Shirley be thus affected?" and her eye, when it turned on him, insensibly lost some of its sternness.

At

At this moment the general looking at him exclaimed, "Oh, Lionel! had I but listened to your wise, benevolent, and disinterested advice, at this moment, perhaps, both my son and his wife would have been alive and happy and here!"

"Dear sir!" cried Lord Shirley in a hoarse voice, "you must not feel and talk thus."

"Not feel thus!—not feel, when you know that I was a hard-hearted obstinate old fool, and not all your repeated and eloquent entreaties, both by word of mouth and in writing, could prevail on me to receive my son's wife as well as my son to my forgiveness!"

"What!—Is it possible? Could Lord Shirley,—did he,—was he the advocate for my poor mother!" cried Catherine, her whole face lighting up with pleasure and surprise, though tears trembled in her eyelids.

"To

“ To be sure he was—and I can show you his letters ; for I kept them—I kept them, to his honour and my disgrace !”

“ Then, *why, why* was this written ?” said Catherine, eagerly taking a letter from her pocket, and showing it to Lord Shirley.—It was from Mrs. Baynton to her nephew ; and after pages of reviling, it added, “ And I assure you that that admirable, sensible young man, the Earl Shirley, the head of your house, agrees with me in all I have said, and will do his utmost to prevent my brother’s receiving either you or your wife.”

Amazement mixed with indignation deprived Lord Shirley at first of utterance. But at length he exclaimed, “ Never, in any respect, did I authorize Mrs. Baynton to think these sentiments mine ; and all I can remember to have said in reply to her violent invectives was, ‘ I own, madam, I wish

wish my cousin had married a woman of his own rank, because I am no friend to unequal marriages :’—and on these words, for I left her soon after, she must have founded what I consider as a very heavy charge against me—that of wishing to foment discord ; and contrary, as I hope the general will convince you, both to my principles and my practice, in this instance as in every other.”

“ Oh ! I am convinced, quite convinced already,” cried the enthusiastic Catherine : seizing Lord Shirley’s hand between both hers : then, looking up in his serious face, with a sort of supplicating smile which he had thought her features incapable of, she added, “ Lord Shirley, dear Lord Shirley ! do pray forgive the resentment which I was betrayed into by this wicked letter : and pray forget—but, no, I hope you did not remark all the cold haughty looks I gave you during dinner-time.”

Lord

Lord Shirley was so taken by surprise, so fluttered by the continued affectionate pressure of her hands, that he could not recollect himself sufficiently even to return it; and it was with much embarrassment that he at last articulated, "It is impossible that any one of your looks, Miss Shirley, can remain unnoticed; and I own they gave me exquisite pain, for which even this frank and kind acknowledgement can scarcely make me amends:—but at length you do me justice, and thus let me still further repay myself for the misery you have occasioned."

So saying, he pressed her hand to his lips; and a smile of meaning passed for one moment across those of the general; for Lord Shirley sighed as he relinquished her hand. Catherine only blushed—but that she did every moment.

"But, hush! here comes my aunt," said Catherine; "and I conjure you not
a word

a word on the subject of her misrepresentation.—Pray remember, my dear grandfather, and you my dear cousin,” (and she smiled while she said so, an epithet she used, to try to make Lord Shirley forget her past coldness,) “that it is my wish to make my aunt my friend, which I can never do while I am the means of procuring her severe reproofs or taunting sarcasms.”

“Make her your friend! She ought to be your friend ready-made, if she felt properly and naturally,” exclaimed the general.

“I am not quite sure of that, according to natural feelings; unless by natural feelings,” observed Lord Shirley, “you mean the ties of blood; for the lady’s dislike of a young and lovely great-niece who is wholly a stranger to her, and whose coming into the family deprives her both of consequence and authority, would appear

pear to me, especially in a woman not remarkable for her fine temper, a very natural feeling."

"Well, well," said the general, "natural or unnatural, I heartily pity you, my poor child, for being exposed to its results."

"I do not pity myself," replied Catherine with an expression of countenance which the general and Lord Shirley knew not exactly how to define, but which those acquainted with the habits of her mind would have called devotional—"I do not pity myself; because I believe all trials of temper to be salutary; and as this world is a state of probation, and the little daily trials of life are perhaps more difficult to be borne than great and unusual ones, I cannot allow myself to think that dispensation otherwise than a kind one, which must call into use those serviceable and christian virtues, patience and forbearance."

There

There was a look almost amounting to a look of alarm which passed at this moment between the general and the peer; for, though respectable men and sincere believers, their religion was a thing which they were contented to know that they possessed, without bringing it into every-day use, like family jewels not fit for every-day wear: its efficacy as a daily guide, as the impeller to good feelings and the restrainer of unkind ones, and as a purifier and regulator of the thoughts as well as actions, was never present to their minds; and any persons who should venture to make it evident that with them such an influence was perpetually present, they were consequently in the habit of styling methodists and fanatics. And here was a beautiful girl talking of this world as being a state of probation, and of courting trials in order to call forth christian virtues! Yet they both thought, Catherine

therine spoke with great simplicity; there was no affectation of superabundant righteousness: and when Mrs. Baynton entered the room, the smile with which she regarded her was evidently sincere, and bore strong marks of an unaffectedly kind and christian spirit.

“You look cold,” said Catherine setting a chair for her aunt very near the fire: “pray take this seat.”

“And cross too!” muttered the general.

“I thank you,” coldly replied Mrs. Baynton: then with a forced and bitter smile she added, “I thank you, madam, for doing the honours of this fire-side to me.”

“Whew!” whistled the general; while Catherine by a look besought his forbearance, and proved her own by taking no notice of this ungracious speech; but seating herself by Mrs. Baynton’s side, she fell into a mournful though not sullen

VOL. I.

H

silence:

silence: a silence which no one, from different causes, was disposed to break. Lord Shirley was contemplating the fine profile of Catherine, which acquired new beauty from the declining attitude of the head, while the direction of her eyes to the fire displayed the beauty of her long dark eye-lashes. Mrs. Baynton's inclination to talk was checked by every species of ill-humour. And sad, tender, remorseful recollections kept the general silent, till at last, with a look and a sigh of agony he suddenly rose and left the room. Catherine's eyes followed him, filling with tears as they did so; and when he closed the door, she laid her hands on the table near her, and leaned her head on them.

She had thus for a few minutes indulged her sympathy with the general, when Mrs. Baynton exclaimed, "Upon my word, Miss Shirley, you have an excellent idea indeed
of

of entertaining your guests! Lord Shirley will not find his visit very amusing."

"Could Lord Shirley come to the house of mourning expecting to be entertained, madam?" replied Catherine meekly.

"At least he did not expect such unnecessary mopishness! I dare say you would have talked fast enough to Mrs. Norris and your other old associates."

An indignant blush overspread the cheek of Catherine; but with a sudden effort she resumed her composure, turning her eyes now evidently full of tears on the ground; then rising, she made a graceful bend of the head to Mrs. Baynton and the earl, and walked to the door.

"Pray, madam, are you going after my brother?" asked Mrs. Baynton.

"Yes, madam, it is my intention to follow him; I conclude he is gone to his
H 2
study,

study, and I do not think it is good for him to be alone."

"May be so," replied her aunt; "but though I am his sister, and I have known him longer than you, I never dared to intrude into his retirement; no, nor even his poor dear last wife, whom he loved better than he ever did love or ever can love any one in the world."

"I conclude he did indeed love her," said Catherine with a deep sigh; for she recollected it was this poor dear wife's influence that had so long prevented him from forgiving her father. "But circumstances are changed since—the general has lost his only child, and I am that child's daughter—surely then he will not deem my wish to soothe him by weeping with him an impertinent intrusion? At any rate it is my duty to offer him my sympathy and society, and if he dislikes to have them

them he will be candid enough to say so."

So saying, and without waiting for more objections from her provoking relative, she left the room and hastened to the general's study; leaving Mrs. Baynton to vent her feelings to the sympathizing peer, as she flattered herself she should find him.

"There now," she began, "did you ever, my lord, see such a conceited, obstinate, independent miss?—No deference for the opinion of those, at least more *experienced* than herself. And what a want of manners, to go and intrude into a gentleman's study, who evidently retired in order to be alone!"

"But that gentleman is her grandfather," coolly replied Lord Shirley; "and it must be a consolation to both of them to weep together over their mutual loss."

"As to *her* loss, I do not believe she
thinks

thinks much of it now she has gained so much, and caused herself to be acknowledged as General Shirley's heiress. Now, do you believe, my lord, that if she had really loved her father she could have cared if the general had fallen down and died, or been trodden to death in the street? And could she have forgiven him, and hung about him so soon, in that bold way?"

Lord Shirley had resolved to endeavour to soothe, and not irritate Mrs. Baynton, if possible, that her temper might not be rendered worse than usual, and Catherine thereby suffer more than she need suffer. But there is nothing that rouses the resentment of a generous heart more than unjust accusations of the amiable and innocent; and Lord Shirley could not hear with patience this misconstruction of actions which were evidently proofs of real tenderness and true nobleness of nature: and with
an

an expression of countenance which had nothing conciliating in it, he answered:—

“Your niece, madam, accounted for her feelings towards the general the other night in a very satisfactory manner; and in a way that did not, in my opinion, call in question her love of her father; and her forgiveness of the general so soon, was only a proof of the religious education which it is evident she has received.”

“All methodistical cant, Lord Shirley, which she learnt among the vulgar people she has been brought up with. Yes—I hear she is mighty religious.”

Lord Shirley, though his fears respecting Catherine's being “righteous over-much” were not a little excited by this information, was too indignant at the petty malice of his angry companion to express what he felt: he therefore only observed, that in moments of affliction, a display of piety, however marked, could not warrant the

the accusation against any one of being guilty of methodistical cant; and more especially not, against an artless, quick-feeling girl under Miss Shirley's affecting circumstances.

“Men and women may be pious and devotional in prosperity,” added Lord Shirley, “but, generally speaking, they *must* be so in adversity: and where should a bereaved orphan like our new-found relative look for comfort and support, but to her Father who is in heaven?”

“Grant me patience!” cried Mrs. Baynton, “if this girl's methodism has not affected even you, my lord!—and I see,—yes, I see very clearly that she will alienate all hearts from me. Yes—I see, I am sure nobody loves me—I am the most miserable woman that exists;—I dare say this viper will soon get me turned out of my brother's house.”

Here sobs, sobs of anger choked her utterance,

utterance, and saved the vexed but disgusted Lionel from more vituperative agony. Still he could not help considering her with excessive pity:—for what consciousness can be so painful, and so difficult to endure, as that expressed by Macbeth,—“And no one loves me!” And Lord Shirley knew that the unhappy Mrs. Baynton had only, while echoing the words of Macbeth, expressed a bitter and melancholy truth. But luckily for him her loud expressions of grief, which as he could not soothe Lord Shirley dared not notice, were interrupted by the re-entrance of the general leaning on the arm of Catherine.

On seeing them, Mrs. Baynton rose and retired, throwing the door after her with considerable force.

“We heard the sound of crying and wailing,” said the general, “as we opened

H 5

the

the door ; I hope, Lionel, you have not been beating Mrs. Baynton?"

"I have been wounding her a little with my tongue, I believe," replied the earl; "a weapon which I thought proper to use in defence of injured merit."

"I am sorry you wounded her," said Catherine kindly, "however justifiable your motives were."

"I suspect, Lionel," observed the general with a languid smile, "Catherine takes the 'injured merit' to herself, and concludes she was the person you defended."

"Me! was it indeed me whom Lord Shirley defended! said Catherine deeply blushing; "O! then I am more sorry than I was before:—and I again conjure you, my kind cousin, and you, my dear grandfather, for my sake, as well as my aunt's, not to keep up this very natural dislike

dislike of me at *present*, by defending me when she attacks me, or praising me as if in opposition to her. It is my wish to gain her affection if possible. I know my progress will be slow; but it will also be sure, if I am allowed to work my way quietly and peaceably: and in the mean time I shall, I trust, be improving myself in very necessary virtues."

To the good sense as well as the kindness of this request her hearers could not be deaf; and Lord Shirley promised to be more civil to Mrs. Baynton than ever, provided she did not speak very ill of her great-niece; and the general promised to behave as well as he could.

Mrs. Baynton did not appear again that night; and the evening, which ended early, served to exhibit Catherine as a soother of her afflicted grandfather in so
aimable

amiable a light,—since she evidently overcame her own grief in order to endeavour to cheer his,—that Lord Shirley, as he went home, convinced himself it was his duty to visit the general every day, and that, come what would, he would dine there again on the morrow.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Catherine and the general entered the room that evening, Lord Shirley thought he perceived a look of satisfaction on Catherine's countenance, through the traces of tears which evidently obscured the brilliancy of her eyes: and he found the truth of his observation confirmed when the general called him on one side before he took leave, and informed him that he had given Catherine permission to invite her friend Miss Merle to stay with her. But, that as he knew this family arrangement would excessively discompose the nerves of his sister, he wished Lord Shirley would come to breakfast the next morning, that he might be present when it was disclosed to her, and by his influence over her mind at
once

once keep her anger in proper bounds, and reconcile her to a circumstance in his opinion as just as it was desirable to his grand-daughter.

Lord Shirley promised compliancē. But as he had something of Mrs. Baynton's pride, he was reconciled to the idea of this continuation of Catherine's intimacy with her inferiors, merely by his dislike that the aunt should be gratified in her inclinations, and the niece thwarted in hers. Lord Shirley was moreover surprised to see that the general was so much afraid of the displeasure of his unamiable and also powerless sister, as to wish him to be present in order to stand between him and her wrath. He must therefore (though an accurate observer generally speaking) have failed to observe how much more frequent and sure is the operation of fear than that of love, in influencing the conduct of human beings

beings towards each other ; and that the power possessed by the meek, the tender, and the benevolent, in both sexes, is a non-entity compared to the dominion enjoyed by the violent, the selfish, and the overbearing.

The next morning Lord Shirley, even before the appointed hour, was seated at the general's breakfast table.

“ Well, my dear child,” said the general, addressing himself very kindly to Catherine ; “ tell me at what hour you wish the carriage to be sent to bring your friend Miss Merle hither.”

“ As soon as you please, sir,” replied Catherine with subdued but evident pleasure.

“ Miss Merle !” exclaimed Mrs. Baynton, “ may I ask what she is coming hither for ?”

“ To stay with my grand-daughter,” coolly replied the general.

“ Grant

“Grant me patience!” vociferated his sister. “What! is that horrid Miss Merle coming hither? coming to stay at the house of General Shirley as a companion to his grand-daughter and heiress?”

“Mrs. Baynton,” cried the general, “*the* Miss Merle is coming hither, *that* Miss Merle, who loved, consoled, and *comforted* my grand-daughter and heiress when her nearest of kin disowned, neglected, and *knew her not.*—*The* Miss Merle who deserved and gained her grateful affection, while her grandfather and her aunt *unnaturally* took no notice of her—This is *the* Miss Merle who is coming to be my guest and her companion.”

“Yes,” returned Mrs. Baynton, “*one* Lucy Merle, the vulgar, democratic, conceited daughter of the vulgar vixenish wife of a country linen-draper and a small-beer brewer.”

“Vulgar! madam! vulgar!” exclaimed
Cathe-

Catherine with a glow of indignation mantling on her cheek, which her own wrongs would never have gathered there : “ Miss Merle vulgar ! She is one of the loveliest and most accomplished girls I know.”

“ You know !” retorted Mrs. Baynton : “ that *may be*, and *yet* Lucy Merle be a very ordinary sort of person.”

“ Then ask Lord Shirley, madam, if he did not think her a beautiful creature.”

Lord Shirley, blushing as he did so, replied that he scarcely looked at her, but he believed she was a pretty, genteel-looking girl.

“ If so then,” resumed Mrs. Baynton, “ it is more particularly improper for this young person to be introduced into a line of life so much above her. She had much better remain in her present obscurity, lest she become an object of admiration to those whose designs, owing to the lowliness of her birth, cannot be honourable, espe-

especially as her father is in another country and she has no protector."

More than the "hctic of a moment" passed across the cheek of Catherine at these words, while she rose in strong emotion and exclaimed, "No protector, madam! Lucy Merle no protector!" then pausing, and deeply sighing, she reseated herself and added, "Poor thing! No—she has indeed no protector."

"Then," rejoined her aunt, "I conclude you feel the propriety of not exposing her to improper admiration and improper addresses. Here is our noble cousin here," added she smiling, "the admiration of all female eyes, the desire of all female hearts, can you answer it to your conscience to expose your friend to the danger of admiring and being admired by *him* for instance?"

"Danger! madam!" cried Catherine, "would Lucy Merle have any danger

danger to fear from Lord Shirley?" darting at him as she spoke a look of almost fierce inquiry.

"None—none in the world," replied Lord Shirley eagerly, "were she ever so charming."

"I thought so," returned Catherine with quickness.

"That remark is not flattering to Lord Shirley's power of pleasing; for, if her honour be in no danger, her heart might. But perhaps, Miss Catherine, you think the earl a good speculation for your friend, and you wish (as you are used to contemplate unequal marriages with complacency) to see this young person the wife of your noble cousin, Lord Shirley?"

"Impossible that I should wish such a thing!" replied Catherine with a degree of eagerness which flattered the earl's self-love—and he gazed on her with grateful pleasure till she went on to say—"Impossible,

possible, madam! not only because I have been brought up to reprobate unequal marriages, but also because, though I well know and approve the character of Lucy Merle, that of Lord Shirley is entirely unknown to me—And how do I know that he would make her happy?”

At this frank avowal, it is not in the power of words to describe the astonishment, the indignant astonishment that shot in angry glances from the eyes of Mrs. Baynton; the surprise not unmingled with archness that appeared on the countenance of the general; and the confusion and mortification that showed themselves in a succession of deep blushes on the face of the handsome earl, he who knew himself to be the most admired man at that moment in high life.

“Lionel!” said the general laughing, “I told you this girl was no flatterer!”

“Flatterer!” exclaimed her aunt, “she
is

is absolutely rude and affronting, as well as absurd.—What! to suppose that one Lucy Merle would not be too happy to marry a nobleman, and a Shirley!”

“ My mother married a Shirley, and her superior in rank ; and she was not too happy !” said Catherine deeply sighing ; “ yet she knew, loved, and idolized the character of the man she married. But surely what I said was not rude ; if it was so, I request your pardon, my lord. I doubt not, when I have known you longer, I shall esteem you as you deserve ; but till then, surely it could be no affront to say that I should be unwilling to trust you with the happiness of my dearest friend.”

“ Certainly, certainly not,” answered Lord Shirley in a hurried uncomfortable manner : for he had been so used to command sudden as well as unqualified admiration, that the sensible caution evinced by

by Catherine's ingenuous declaration had given him a feeling of mortification unusual, and therefore hard to be borne; especially as in the recesses of his heart he had thought that Catherine herself might not perhaps be reluctant to receive his addresses:—yet he was now honestly informed by Catherine, she was not at all sure he would be a good match even for her humble friend!

“It is impossible,” said Mrs. Baynton with great acrimony, “to hold any satisfactory conversation with persons with whom, from the company they have kept and the sort of education they have received, one can have no community of thought or feeling; and I foresee that you, my deluded brother, by allowing your grand-daughter to continue her acquaintance with those low persons, will only perpetuate those notions it were better for her to get rid of as soon as possible.—Let me tell you,
Miss

Miss Catherine Shirley, that any notice *whatever* from my Lord Shirley would be an honour to a Lucy Merle."

"Any notice *whatever*, madam!" echoed Catherine, regarding her with surprise mingled with suspicion and alarm.

"It is vulgar to repeat a person's words, child!" said Mrs. Baynton: "but I did say so."

"Then you said wrong, madam," exclaimed Lord Shirley, his fine face suffused with a more worthy glow than what had so lately crimsoned it; for it sprung from a more worthy cause, and one becoming the real nobleness of his nature and the correctness of his principles:—"The notice even of a *prince* would be no *honour*, but a decided *dishonour*, to any woman, however low her situation in life, if it implied dishonourable wishes and dishonourable

nourable intentions :—and, so far from your friend's being in any danger from my assiduities,—for who ever dared, even by implication, to brand me with the name of seducer ?—that, were she in danger from any one else, I myself would be to her the protector which Providence has denied her !”

“ I believe you, I believe you !” cried Catherine with sparkling eyes, and eagerly giving him her hand, gazing earnestly, and almost unconsciously, as she did so, on the earl's deep blush and ingenuous expression of countenance, which carried home to her heart the conviction that he spoke nothing but the truth. “ My dear lord,” she added I am disposed to think very highly of you for two reasons :—first, because you were my poor father's true and zealous friend ; and, secondly, because you have such a habit of blushing ;

blushing; and it was a remark of my mother's—that being whom I regarded as a model of correct observation—‘that women may blush from want of knowledge of the world, from weakness of nerves, and many inadequate and some improper feelings: but a man’s blushes, especially those of a man of the world, are always,’ said she, ‘in my opinion, a proof, that an intercourse with that world has not rubbed off the gloss of his best feelings; but that, if he be not still entirely virtuous, he retains a love of virtue, and a degree of sensibility, which may ultimately make him a blessing to himself and others.’”

Lord Shirley did not blush the less for these commendations on his blushes, which Catherine delivered with cheeks glowing like his own. But though Lord Shirley blushed from pleasure, it was not

VOL. I.

I

unmixed

unmixed pleasure; as the warmth and readiness of her praise was even a stronger proof of her indifference than her preceding frankness had been.

The general made no observation. But not so his sister. She, drawing herself up, with a disdainful look declared that "she never heard any thing so indecorous in her life, as a young lady's admiring so warmly and avowedly a gentleman's blushes! It was really fulsome flattery, though spoken in the words of a third person."

Consternation the most painful kept Catherine silent, and indignation Lord Shirley: but the general with great vehemence declared, that there was no knowing how to please a crabbed old woman like her. "One moment," cried he, "you scold the poor child because she does not say civil things to a man, and the

the next you abuse her because she says too many!"

To this speech his sister made an angry retort, which he as angrily answered; till harsh words succeeded so rapidly to each other, that Lord Shirley made a hasty bow, and was withdrawing from so unpleasant a scene, but was requested to stay by the general, who, ringing the bell, desired the carriage might go instantly for Miss Merle.

This order led Mrs. Baynton back to the original cause of their dispute; and she desired to know whether the general really meant that this nobody should sit at table with them.

"To be sure, I do."

"What! when there is company?"

"Undoubtedly."

"What a want of proper pride!"

"No—what a proof of true pride!"

Mrs. Baynton, I am too proud to sup-

pose the man or woman whom *I* think good enough to *associate* with *me* is not fit company for any guest of mine."

"But how do you know, brother, that she will not help herself with her own knife and fork, and feed herself with her knife?"

"And suppose she should?" replied the general. "Lord Shirley, don't you think you could survive the shock?"

"Yes, general," he replied; "as I have not the same exquisite susceptibility which distinguishes, I see, another of the family."

"I must be allowed," said Catherine blushing, "to say, that you seem, madam, to have very erroneous notions of what the family of a respectable tradesman is. My friend Lucy has never associated with the very vulgar, though not, probably, with the very high;—and I am sure she has too strong a sense of
nicety,

nicety, as well as decorum, to offend against the decencies of life at *any* table."

"I do not doubt it—I do not doubt it at all, my dear," replied the general, "spite of what that fantastical old lady thinks or says."

"Brother! General Shirley! I—I—despise you!" said his sister, nearly choked with passion, and leaving the room with precipitation; while Catherine, only too conscious that she was already, and must become still more, a constant source of contention between her aunt and her grandfather, could not regain her tranquillity, though kindly soothed both by the general and the earl.

"Do not grieve, my sweet child," said the latter; "if she had not this and *you* to complain of, she would have something else. Complaining is to her like a prepared atmosphere to the consumptive patient; she could not live without it. She

She led my first wife a wearisome existence, who was a sweet gentle being, and had not spirit enough to resist her ; and nevertheless my sister always declared that Mrs. Shirley was the worst of tempers." My second wife kept her in order, and she hated her during her life ; but when she died, she declared she was the most angelic creature breathing ! In short, there is no accounting for the obliquities of temper : all one can do is to curb one's own temper, and to bear with that of others."

" But one cannot do that with certainty without the aid of *religion*," cried Catherine.—" And tried as I am likely to be, what do I not owe to that excellent mother who taught me to endeavour to be a practical Christian, and that excellent father, who added his instructions to hers !" A mournful silence ensued, which was broken by the arrival of Lucy Merle.

Catherine

Catherine immediately left the room to receive her friend and conduct her to her own apartment; while Lord Shirley, declaring his intention of returning to dinner, left the general to himself.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VIII.

BEFORE the dinner-hour drew nigh, the general received a note from the earl, informing him that a letter had just reached him from his younger sister Lady Frances, telling him that she expected to be in London and at his house in a few hours, and in that case he hoped he might be allowed to bring her with him. This note the general sent to Mrs. Baynton for her perusal, desiring her at the same time to write word to Lord Shirley, that he should be happy to see Lady Frances. Mrs. Baynton complied with his desire; but she could scarcely forbear inserting in the note how shocked she was that her fair and noble relative would be forced to meet at the general's table company so unworthy of her.

Neither

Neither the general nor Mrs. Baynton had seen Lady Frances since she was quite a child, as she had for many years resided with an aunt of her mother's in Scotland ; but they knew her to be a distinguished belle even amongst the lovely daughters of Caledonia, and she was on the point of marriage with a Scotch nobleman.

Mrs. Baynton, who piqued herself on the Shirley beauty, was extremely anxious to see this young lady, who still upheld that distinction so flattering to her family vanity, and without calling forth that personal jealousy which similar advantage in a near relation like Catherine, —one, too, who moved in the same circle as herself,—could not fail to excite in her envious mind. Eagerly, therefore, did she look forward to the arrival of Lady Frances; and calling up the most gracious expression to her countenance, she

15

resolved,

resolved, in order to do honour to her noble relations, to forget the provoking dispute that had driven her from the presence of the general, and even overlook the misery of being obliged to sit at table with nobody knew who.

Catherine, meanwhile, was disclosing to Lucy Merle the irritated state of her aunt's mind, and earnestly begging her to be on her guard, and not irritate her still more by severe replies, however provoked: while Lucy, knowing herself, begged to be allowed to dine in Catherine's apartment, lest she should be tempted to affront her aunt.

"You do yourself injustice," replied Catherine; "for I know you will not only behave with firmness and dignity, becoming your own worth and my regard, but also with that forbearance becoming your sex and age, and due to Mrs. Baynton's rank and situation."

"Due.

“Due to her rank, perhaps, as society now is ; but not becoming my principles.”

“Not your political *ones* ; but remember, you are a Christian, and forbearance is a Christian’s duty.”

“Aye, my dear friend,” replied Lucy ; “I can bear to hear *you* talk of Christian duty, for *you*, I know, practise all you preach.”

There was no one in the drawing-room but the general and Lord Shirley when Lucy entered leaning on Catherine. She had been already presented to the earl, and the former did not receive her as a stranger, for he took her hand and welcomed her in the kindest manner.

“I have experienced a disappointment to-day, my dear child,” said the general to Catherine : “I expected Lord Shirley would have brought with him his sister Lady Frances, but she is detained a week longer in Scotland.”

Lord

Lord Shirley, meanwhile,—though not at all conscious that he did so,—was distressing Lucy Merle by the earnestness with which he looked at her : nay, he did not only look at, he absolutely examined her face with fixed attention ; for he thought he had somewhere seen features resembling hers, and those features were remarkable. Her beauty,—and she was very handsome,—was of that cast of features and of that peculiar look which is usually called Jewish. Her outline was bold, for her nose approached the aquiline, and her mouth was rather wide ; but this defect was made amends for by the excessive beauty of her full red lips, which, whenever they opened, disclosed the finest teeth possible. Her forehead was high and open, her hair glossy and of a jet black. Her eye-brows were thick, and rather too near each other ; her eyes were of a light and sparkling gray ; but

so

so long and black were the eye-lashes that veiled them, that in some views they had all the effect of dark ones. Her complexion was a decided brown, or olive colour; but so clear, that at every moment "her pure and eloquent blood spoke in her cheeks," and made it impossible for her to conceal the incessant emotion to which her quick feelings exposed her. Her person was tall and even commanding; but it was rather too thin, for beauty: still, when dressed to advantage, as she now was, she had altogether a most commanding and striking appearance.

Catherine and the general both observed the earnest manner in which the earl had examined Lucy's features; though neither of them wondered that he should take pleasure in looking at a very lovely girl: but they also observed that his earnest gaze distressed her; and the general, to divert the attention which was evidently become

Become painful, desired Lord Shirley to take down a new book of prints which he had lately purchased, and show it to the ladies. He did so: and as they were viewing it, the general, observing that Lucy looked at the prints so closely as to discover that she was short-sighted, and, consequently, that it would be more agreeable to her to look at them sitting, brought her a chair with well-bred alacrity, and was in the act of presenting it to her with a bow of *the old school*, a bow at once graceful and respectful, while Lord Shirley was smiling his approbation of the general's gallantry, when Mrs. Baynton entered the room.

The general's respectful obeisance, and Lord Shirley's look of pleasure, at once appeared to her sufficient proofs that this fine young creature was the admired inheritor of the Shirley beauty, especially as she was in cousin's mourning, as it is called;

called ; and she could not for a moment imagine that a *Lucy Merle* would be in mourning for a *Shirley*. Accordingly she eagerly advanced towards Lucy, whom though she had heard she had never seen; and while Lucy awaited her approach with all the dignity of a proud republican conscious of injury, she put on one of her sweetest smiles and, saluting her cheek, exclaimed “ I am so glad ! so delighted to see you, my sweet girl ! This is a pleasure I have long been ambitious of ! ”

Nothing could exceed the silent astonishment of the general and Lord Shirley, except the almost remorseful confusion and surprise of Lucy, and the grateful pleasure of Catherine, who, now advancing from another part of the room, was on the point of saying—“ My dear aunt, how truly kind is this ! ” when the servant announced dinner, just as Mrs. Baynton had heard the agitated Lucy reply,

ply, in a low voice, " You are very kind, I am sure, madam."

The general, who soon began to suspect the truth, again bowing respectfully, drew the arm of Lucy under his, and led her into the dining-room, while the earl gave his to the aunt and niece. The former then said in an audible whisper, which was overheard by the general, " I congratulate you, my lord ! She is a sweet beautiful creature ! quite the Shirley style of feature—quite the Shirley profile ; don't you think so ? far more like our family than Miss Shirley is."

Lord Shirley now discovered the mistake, and was too mischievous to undeceive her, as the longer it was continued the more likely it was to end in her mortification, which he was the more inclined to enjoy, because she never asked where Lucy Merle was, and why they went to dinner without her ; concluding, he supposed,

posed, that her representations had been attended to.

When they were seated at table, Mrs. Baynton hoped her ladyship had had a pleasant journey; and before Catherine, who now understood the whole truth, could reply and rectify the mistake, the general said "Does your ladyship take soup?" Then turning to Lord Shirley, he said, "Yes—the true Shirley style and profile, ey! Lionel!" While Mrs. Baynton, gazing on her blushing vis-à-vis, with a mouth distended, with a smile of ineffable conceit declared "she blushed as becomingly as her brother."

The gentlemen could now no longer restrain their laughter; nor even Lucy herself, who now understood that she was taken for the Lady Frances Shirley whom she had expected to meet: but Catherine regarding them with a look of reproach, and leaning forward to speak to her aunt
in

in a low voice, lest the servants should overhear her, said, "Dear madam, this is not Lady Frances Shirley, but my friend Lucy Merle!"

Rage too mighty for utterance now lightened from the dark eye of Mrs. Baynton, while the general said, "Fye, Catherine, fye! why did you so soon put a stop to a little harmless pleasantry?"

"Excuse me, sir; but I cannot think any pleasantry harmless that must end in pain to another."

"Pshaw! what a little Puritan it is!" added the general; and was going on, but stopped in compliance with the beseeching looks of Catherine, and also in alarm at the frightful looks of his sister, whom rage too mighty for words rendered entirely silent, though her heaving bosom sufficiently proved the passion that was struggling within it. Lord Shirley, the general, and Lucy, meanwhile
went.

went on with their dinner, not appearing to notice her emotion ; but Catherine was wholly unable to take her attention off her aunt, whom she expected to see every moment seized with indisposition ; especially as the general could not help complimenting Miss Merle on her quality look, which had even deceived a lady of his sister's experience in such advantages. To which Lucy could not restrain herself from replying,—

“ You would indeed congratulate me, sir, if you knew how much this little mistake confirms me in my own peculiar way of thinking, and in my conviction of the emptiness of the distinctions of birth ; for, if they really conferred that superiority which is attributed to them, could I, the low-born Lucy Merle, have been mistaken by that honourable lady for the noble Lady Frances Shirley ? ”

Though

Though Lucy said this with very becoming blushes and feminine gentleness, the earl and the general were not pleased with the observation, and Catherine, on every account, wished it unsaid at this moment; and the more so, as it restored Mrs. Baynton to her speech by the additional indignation which it excited: while Catherine, afraid of what she might utter, dismissed the servants, who had just set the second course on the table. "Am I then made a laughing-stock to girls?" screamed out Mrs. Baynton. "But I will not forgive it while I live." And springing from her seat, she was running out of the room; but Catherine hung on her gown, and following her, conjured her to forgive what had passed, blaming herself for not having presented her friend, and owning she had not in her opinion been quite well used.

The

The candour and generosity of Catherine—qualities which Mrs. Baynton admired and envied, but could not imitate—made her at this season of irritation more odious to her than ever; and alive only to the feelings of the moment, she hastily disengaged her gown from Catherine's grasp; and giving her a violent push, which drove her against the corner of the side-board, she ran out of the room.

The sight of Catherine evidently in pain called forth all the violence of her young friend, and her eyes beamed with indignation. "Has she hurt you? Are you hurt?" screamed out the affectionate girl, running to her; while Lord Shirley faltered out the same question; and the general sat in speechless, motionless consternation.

"I am not much hurt, and the pain is almost gone," said Catherine. "Oh! it was nothing!—nothing at all!"

"But

"But it may be something next time," muttered the general; "and she shall not stay under this roof to do you mischief."

As he said these words he had drawn Catherine fondly on his knee; but on hearing them, she sprung up, regardless of the pain she felt, and in the most earnest terms conjured the general to be not *merciful*, but *just*.

"I *mean* to be just, and, therefore, cannot be *merciful*, my dear," he replied. Then, with a look and manner which forbade further reply, he opened the door of his library, and locked himself in there.

"Oh! Lord Shirley!" exclaimed Catherine, "for pity's sake, nay, for the sake of justice, let me beg of you to intercede for my poor aunt! *Indeed*, indeed, in this instance she was more sinned against than sinning!"

"What! when she was the means of hurting you at the very moment when you
were

were blaming yourself, and resenting her wrongs!"

"Yes; for what I said was officious and ill-timed. It was provoking, indeed it was, coming as it did from one who was the cause of all that disturbed her."

"How so?—You the cause!"

"Yes—my introduction into the family, and my bringing my friend Lucy here, were certainly the cause; and she must hate me, I know she must."

"And is hatred, especially that of an aunt to a niece, so amiable a feeling, that, instead of being punished, you think Mrs. Baynton ought to be rewarded for it?—Suppose she had pushed you so violently against the corner of the side-board as to cause a serious injury, of which you had died, would the jury have been influenced by your reasoning to acquit her of murder? If they did, they must have been

been a jury composed of elderly aunts who had young and handsome nieces."

"My lord," cried Lucy, her eyes sparkling with fierce indignation, and her brow contracted into an almost awful frown, "let me entreat you not to say a word for this horrid woman. Who knows, as the general says, but the *next time* she may indeed injure her?" Then, before Lord Shirley could recollect where he had seen that eye and that brow, even more peculiar in anger than they were in mildness, her features relaxed into tender sorrow, and clasping Catherine to her bosom she wept over her in silence.

"I am silenced, but not convinced," said Catherine; "for I enter into my aunt's feelings, and can make allowances for them."

"Yes; you have done nothing else but consider her feelings ever since you came:

came: but when has she ever considered yours?"

"No matter: What glory is it, if when ye are buffeted for your faults ye shall take it patiently? But if, when you do well and suffer for it ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

"Sweet enthusiast!" almost escaped the lips of Lord Shirley: for, like most men and women of the world, he had such a dread of any thing which approached fanaticism and enthusiasm, that he fancied the simple language of a sincere Christian, such as Catherine had just spoken, resembled them too nearly. But before he could reply, the general entered the room, and in a low but firm voice said he had written to his sister to desire she would seek another abode to-morrow.

"And I—I am the cause!" cried Catherine with great feeling. "It is I who drive her forth from that home which she would else have enjoyed for years!"

VOL. I.

K

"Miss

“ Miss Shirley, give me leave to tell you it is my sister’s own vile temper, and not you, which is the cause of this exile. And as to calling this the home she would have enjoyed for years, can you in your conscience believe, my dear, that a woman with such a disposition can ever long *enjoy* any place? Besides, you seem to forget that the woman for whom you plead was one of those who strove the most to keep your beloved father from *his* home.” (Here the general’s voice was stopped by strong emotion; and Catherine raised her tearful eyes to Heaven.)—“ Does not his child,” he continued, “ owe some retributive justice to his memory?”

“ Yes—yes,” cried Catherine;—“ she does, the only justice worthy of it!”

“ And do you forget that your lamented mother had not a foe so inveterate against her, and the success of my son’s appeals to

to have her received by me, as this cruel aunt whose cause you are thus advocating?"

"Oh, no!—I remember it all. I remember my father's woes and my mother's wrongs. But that mother taught her child to forgive injuries; to return good for evil; and to endeavour to fashion her life according to that holy rule which teaches us to love our enemies; to do good to those that hate us; and pray for those who despitely use and persecute us!—Sir, the justice, the only justice I owe the memory of my lost parents, is to act up to their precepts, and prove that their child is neither unworthy of nor ungrateful for the pains they bestowed upon her mind and heart!"

"You are a noble creature," said the general, sobbing as he spoke. "This is magnanimity—is it not, Lionel?"

K 2

Lord

Lord Shirley, affected himself, could only echo the word ' noble.'

But these praises, or rather the wording of them, displeased Catherine; for she felt that what she had said was spoken neither in a magnanimous nor noble spirit, but simply in a Christian one, and as a fulfilment of her Christian duty.—At this moment a servant came in to say that Mrs. Baynton wished to see the earl—and he instantly obeyed the summons.

While he was gone, a sort of perturbed silence took place; and Catherine thought she observed on the general's countenance a degree of anxious emotion which portended well for the interests of her aunt.

It was not long before Lord Shirley returned; but evidently not very kindly impressed in favour of the power from whom he came as ambassador. The truth was,

was, that when Mrs. Baynton's frantic rage had a little subsided, her pride became alarmed at the consciousness of the vulgar, unbecoming, and unfeminine manner in which she had displayed her feelings; and she felt the more shame, because she had so behaved in the presence of her noble cousin: to what such a nobody as Lucy Merle thought of her conduct she was perfectly indifferent. Her anger she thought, and with some truth, was justifiable; but the mode of expressing it the contrary; and she felt that an apology for it was due to the person whom she had thus offended. She also felt, that without such an apology she had no chance of appeasing her brother, whom, when once resolved, she knew to be unbending; and that, with it, she might possibly be restored to favour, and allowed to remain where she was. Accordingly, she wished
to

to see Lord Shirley, in order to make him her agent on the occasion : and as soon as he obeyed her summons, she began, with many regrets for the quickness of her *sensibilities*, to express her sorrow and shame that her just resentment of injuries should have led her into so improper a way of displaying her sense of them.

“ Improper, madam ! Not only improper, but unjust,” cried Lord Shirley, fired with indignation, while he contrasted, in idea, the dispositions of the aunt and the niece. “ You vented your anger on the innocent, not the offending. Your arm should have been lifted against the general or me, not your amiable, unoffending, and, I must say, *angelic* niece.”

If Lord Shirley had wished to revenge Catherine's wrongs to the utmost, he could not have succeeded better than by giving such praises to the being towards whom she

she felt the strongest of all passions—jealousy.

“Well, this I was not prepared for,” she at length faintly articulated. “I thought, at least, I had a friend in you, my lord.”

“And so you have, madam,” replied Lord Shirley, a little moved by her distress; “and so you shall find me, if you will let me know how I can serve you. Else why did I instantly obey your summons?”

“True—very true,” sighed Mrs. Baynton. “This, then, my lord, is my business with you. I feel that I have offended my own dignity, and my niece’s, by giving her a violent push; and a true gentlewoman, my lord, is not ashamed to apologize for the fault she has committed against her rank as a gentlewoman. Of my just resentment towards Miss Shirley, the

the canting plausible cause of all my misery, I never can, never *will* repent."

Lord Shirley now exclaimed, with haughty displeasure on his countenance :
 " And was it only to hear your abuse of your niece, madam, that you sent for me ?"

" No, my lord : it was to request you to be the bearer of my apologies to Miss Shirley apologies for my personal violence I mean, and for that *ONLY*."

" Am I to add those *emphasized* words, madam, when I deliver your message ?"

" Ye—es, my lord, if Miss Shirley be *alone* ; but not if the *general* be present."

Lord Shirley, disgusted at her mean conduct as much as at her vindictive injustice, immediately bowed, and, without looking at her, withdrew.

" Well,

“ Well, my lord, have you seen my aunt ?” said Catherine eagerly, who had been endeavouring during the earl’s absence to melt the general’s heart in favour of his offending sister.

“ I have seen your aunt,” he coolly replied, “ and she has deputed me to make her apologies to you for having forgotten herself so far as to push you away from her in the manner she did.”

“ Indeed !—Well, that is more than I expected,” muttered the general.

“ And more than I required, I am sure,” cried Catherine. “ And I will go to her directly and beg her to forget, as I do, all that has passed of an unpleasant nature.”

“ You had better remain where you are, my dear Miss Shirley,” said the earl smiling, “ as the pacification is not so complete as your generous nature imagines it to be ; and it is my opinion, that when I

K 5

shall

shall have certified to Mrs. Baynton that Miss Shirley accepts her apologies, it will be better to leave that lady to her own meditations, at least till to-morrow."

"My poor aunt!" cried Catherine: "I see she has no friend, then, but myself."

"And your being her friend is not the means of making *me* so," replied the earl: "because your generosity only makes me more conscious of the contrary quality in *her*. Therefore, for *her* sake, you must try to be less *amiable*."

Catherine was going to reply, when Lucy Merle, pulling her by the arm, made her remark a great change in the general's countenance: and she had scarcely asked him if he was unwell, when he desired his physician to be sent for directly, as he felt the approach of his old enemy the gout, and was afraid
it

it was going to attack his stomach. While Catherine, who had never witnessed this painful disorder, and who feared the agitation of which she had been the innocent cause had helped to bring it on, was hanging over the couch to which the general had been conveyed, and trying to make herself useful to him, Lord Shirley took an opportunity of whispering in her ear, that her benevolent wishes concerning her aunt would find the gout their most effectual assistant; as Mrs. Baynton, to do her justice, was the best of nurses; and the general, when ill with the gout, could never bear any one near him but her.

“I am *glad* to hear it,” cried Catherine; “and awkward as I already am on this occasion, I hope I shall be more awkward still, that my aunt may be recalled to her office, and I dismissed, even though I am dismissed for incompetency.—Well,
little

little did I think that I should ever wish to delegate to another the office of nurse to my grandfather!"

When the physician came, he ordered the general to keep his room, and be as quiet as possible; adding, "With such a skilful and experienced nurse as your sister, general, you can't fail to do well; and she knows all that is necessary to be done, you know—But where is she?—why do I not see her at her post?"

"That young creature is my nurse *now*, Dr. —," said the general, sighing.—
"Let me present to you my grand-daughter, Catherine Shirley, my son William's only child."

This was the first time the general had had an opportunity of introducing Catherine, and doing so induced a degree of agitation not favourable to his complaint.

"Young lady, I rejoice to see you
here,"

here," replied Dr. ——. "But you, my good friend, must not look back, but forward, now, if you mean to get well: and though I doubt not but the sight of this young nurse is very delightful to you, I suspect that of your old one would be more salutary:—therefore I advise you to call her to you as soon as possible."

"There, sir! did you hear that?" cried Catherine, as soon as Dr. —— was out of hearing: "You *must* forgive my poor aunt now."

"Pshaw!" muttered the general: "one would really think that you bribed the doctor to prescribe the nauseous dose to me."

"But if the nauseous dose be the only medicine that can do you good,—surely, dear sir, you are not such a baby as to object to it because it is *nauseous*?"

"Well, well—say no more at present: and I suppose you will allow that it is only
only

only proper that she should offer her services?"

"I am not sure of that."

"Indeed," cried Lord Shirley, "you carry your indulgence too far; and the general is only just in his expectations. Nor will his sister, I am convinced, hesitate to ask permission to attend on him when I have seen her, and told her how ill he is." Then, without waiting for a reply from the general, Lord Shirley repaired to Mrs. Baynton's apartment. He found her in tears—tears more of anger than of grief; as she had been informed of the general's attack, and concluded that Catherine would take advantage of his illness to ingratiate herself so completely into his favour, that her influence would be wholly undermined, her services treated as wholly unnecessary, and her chance of remaining in the house wholly annihilated. But her tears passed with the earl
for

for tears of affectionate alarm ; and after assuring her that Catherine received her apologies with eager pleasure, he advised her, if she wished to conciliate the general, to take advantage of the present circumstances, and offer her services as nurse ; which, after Dr. ——'s eulogy on her nursing powers, would, he was convinced, be most kindly received.

“ Yes — I may offer,” replied Mrs. Baynton ; “ but I dare say the new nurse will take care my offer shall not be accepted.”

“ If, by the new nurse, you mean your amiable *niece*, madam ; I must tell you that she is your warmest advocate with your offended brother.”

“ Grant me patience !” exclaimed Mrs. Baynton. “ Then you mean to say that if my brother forgives me, it will be at her intercession ?”

“ I do, madam.”

“ Then,

"Then, my lord, I will not be forgiven; and I had rather leave the house this moment—and, mark me! however ill the general may be, he shall *request*, for I will not *offer*, my assistance!"

Lord Shirley immediately rose, and in silence left this amiable woman to her own meditations.

"I am afraid I have made bad worse," said the earl in a whisper to Catherine, in reply to the questioning glance of her eyes.—The general did not speak, but he looked anxious and disappointed.

"There, take care, girl, how you pass me!—For pity's sake do," cried the general rather peevishly. "I see you have not been used to move near gouty persons."

"Indeed I have not," replied Catherine affectionately: "and earnestly for your sake, dear sir, do I now wish I had:—but that wish is weak, because a vain one."

one. The wish that my aunt was at her post as your head nurse is a rational one, because it may be gratified."

"What! would you have me *sue* to the old virago?"

"I would have you forgive your sister, sir, though she had sinned against you ever so much and ever so often: and especially as it is an offence against me, not yourself, that you are resenting."

"I could easier have forgiven a fault against myself, you ungrateful girl!"

"But, dear sir, unforgiveness is unforgiveness, however amiable the motive."

But Catherine would have continued in vain to speak moral sentiments in aid of her wishes, had not her own awkwardness served her cause effectually; for now she not only seemed to be on the point of touching the inflamed toe, where at length the gout settled, but she let something

thing fall out of her hand upon it ; and the general uttered a cry of pain, accompanied by an oath. “ I verily believe the girl did it on purpose to carry her point ! ” said the general, when the pain had subsided sufficiently to let him speak ; and the distress visible in Catherine’s expressive countenance inclined him to speak kindly. “ The matter is decided now — Go, my dear, go and desire Norris to present my compliments to Mrs. Baynton, and tell her that her services are wanted in my apartment.”

Lord Shirley tried to be glad, and to look so, because Catherine did ; but he was provoked at concessions so ill-deserved by the object of them. “ Shall we go away, sir, and leave you alone with my aunt ? ” said Catherine, too delicate to wish to witness what might, she thought, be a painful meeting between the brother and sister. But the general assuring her that

that he should take no notice of what had passed, she resolved to remain; and in about twenty minutes after she had been sent for, Mrs. Baynton, with great dignity, sailed into the room.

Catherine advanced toward her, half extending her hand: but her aunt would not even look at her, while she slowly approached the general, and said—"General Shirley, I am here according to your commands. What is your pleasure with me?"

"My business, madam, is pain, not pleasure, I assure you. I have gotten the gout, and I do not like to have any one come near me but yourself. Catherine is a kind-hearted, well-intentioned girl, but she does not understand waiting on gouty patients:—therefore I sent for you. So—is it peace or war between us?"

"Peace, if your infirmities make it necessary

cessary to you, brother. But I could not suppose I could be wanted where Miss Shirley was; I thought she was one of your great geniuses, who know every thing by intuition."

"Me!" cried the alarmed Catherine, "dear me, madam, do you take me for a genius? I am sure I hope not."

"I take you for a much better thing," replied the general, "a fine-tempered, forgiving, forbearing creature; but for all that I do not like you very near me at present: therefore I recommend Lionel, your friend, and yourself, to go and eat the dessert." They immediately withdrew, and left the brother and sister together.

CHAP.

CHAPTER IX.

As Catherine was forbidden to enter the general's dressing room because he was trying to rest, she and her companion, at Lord Shirley's particular desire, remained with him while he drank his wine; and when they adjourned to the drawing-room, the earl resumed the examination of the new prints which dinner had interrupted. From prints they got to books, of which the general had a choice collection in different languages; and it was soon evident to the earl, that, though they made no display of their knowledge, his young companions were perfectly well versed in every modern language. Their remarks on the prints had led him also to suspect they understood drawing; and the pleasure Catherine expressed at seeing a volume of Handel

Handel and Purcell bound up together, put by mistake in the drawer that held the prints, convinced him that music was one of her accomplishments.

“I do not expect,” said the earl smiling, “that you will either of you be guilty of the indecorum of owning you can draw like artists, and sing or play like professors; but I expect either of you will be very ready to say these fine things of the other. Therefore,” affecting to whisper Lucy Merle, he said “Does Miss Shirley draw?”

“Admirably.”

“Does she play, and sing?”

“Delightfully.”

“And now in your ear. Miss Shirley, does Miss Merle draw?”

“Very well.”

“And play, and sing?”

“Both—very pleasingly.”

“All I know of languages, and all I know of music or drawing, I owe to the instructions

instructions of my friend, my lord," said Lucy Merle blushing with grateful emotion while she spoke; "and when you have seen her drawings, and heard her sing and play, you will feel that I must have been stupid indeed, not to have profited in some measure by her instructions."

"I did not contradict your high-flown description of my performances," said Catherine smiling, "because I knew Lord Shirley would naturally attribute my denial to modesty, or the affectation of it; and I well knew that those performances themselves would in time give him a juster idea of them."

"But when?" asked Lord Shirley.

"My drawings are locked up, and not easily gotten at at present: and in the present state of my spirits, as well as my grandfather's, you will feel, my lord," she added mournfully, "that I can neither play nor sing, even if propriety warranted it." And Lord Shirley, conscious that
his

his wish had been prematurely expressed, asked her to excuse his want of thought, and led to other subjects.

It was late in the evening before Lord Shirley recollected that he had an engagement to sup at a fashionable coffee-house with a friend on the eve of leaving England; when he found it necessary to apologize to Catherine and Lucy for leaving them. That night the general's own man slept in the room with him, and Mrs. Baynton left him at midnight. The next morning, when she arose and heard the general was visible, she sent him a note, to know at what hour the carriage was to be ordered to conduct her to her future home, as the order for removal which she had received before, had never, that she knew of, been rescinded.

“Pshaw!” muttered the general to himself. “A vindictive! unforgiving—Well; e’en let her go—it will be a good riddance:” but a violent twinge in his
great

great toe made him recollect how necessary she was; and he desired the servant to tell his sister that he wished to see her directly.

. She came. The general desired her to forget and forgive: she cried a little; and he hemmed away a little hoarseness in his throat, and Mrs. Baynton consented to remain..

. The gout seemed to have come on purpose to effect this reconciliation, for it disappeared two days after; during which time, Catherine on *principle* went very rarely into the general's room, in order to make his sole dependence on her aunt as great as possible: and when he complained to Lord Shirley that he thought she rather neglected him, the earl, who so far had learnt to know her, pointed out to her grandfather what could alone be the motive of her seeming neglect; and the general owned that he believed he was right.

VOL. I.

L

Before

Before the end of the week the general was down stairs as usual : and as Captain Shirley's death had then been known at least three weeks, and his father was recovered, the earl began to feel that his friends and acquaintance might with propriety wonder at the frequency and length of his visits in New Street ; and his female friends were very curious to know what sort of a woman the new Miss Shirley was.

The earl also began to look forward with pain to the fourth of June, when Catherine, now known to him alone, would appear at court, and be admired, and probably wooed, by men of as high pretensions as himself. And why should that idea give him pain, if Catherine was not the chosen of his heart ? That heart forcibly whispered that she *was* so ; but he also felt that his judgement had not as yet ratified the choice of his heart :
for

For had she not lived during three years with her inferiors in birth, and persons professing principles hostile (he thought) to the well-being of society?—might she not have formed intimacies with persons whom he could not associate with?—had she not an independence of character and a steadiness of affection, he believed he ought to call it principle, which would make her resist being called upon to give up those intimacies?—and would not her husband if he required this sacrifice be degraded in her estimation? Was she not also methodistically inclined? And above all, did she not regard him with most complete indifference?—Such were the thoughts that now every day in rapid succession occurred to the perturbed mind of Lord Shirley: but still he every day called in New Street, if he did not dine, there to gaze on the unconscious subject

of them; who, by the display of some new grace or some new virtue, riveted his chains still closer each time he beheld her.

I have stated before, that the general's gout left him so suddenly as to enable him to come down stairs and live as usual. Before the end of the week, and on the third Sunday since the loss of his son was known to him, he was able to rise early and breakfast as was his custom at nine o'clock, ten having been the hour the preceding morning. Accordingly breakfast was brought in, and soon followed by Mrs. Baynton; who seeing that the general did not seat himself because he was waiting for Catherine to do the honours, observed with a malicious smile, "Nay, brother, you may as well sit down, and let me make the breakfast; for Miss Shirley and her friend are gone nobody knows where, and there is no waiting for them;

them; for who can tell when they may choose to return?"

"Catherine and her friend walked out at this time of day?"

"They went out long before eight o'clock."

"And pray who went with them?"

"Nobody: Miss Shirley did not choose to take a servant."

"How very improper!"

"Yes; and not to be at home at breakfast is worse still. But Sunday is, you know, with a certain class, a *junketing* day;—so, very likely they are gone to meet some of Lucy Merle's friends at her mother's."

"Sunday a junketing day for Miss Shirley? No, Mrs Baynton, I can't believe it."

"Or perhaps, brother, she has gone to some conventicle."

The general sighed, but spoke not;
for

for he thought it possible, and that idea was the worst of the two.

“ Well,” said he, “ I suppose when she comes she will condescend to explain where she has been, and in the mean while we will go to breakfast without her.”

But the general had not his usual appetite, for Catherine had disappointed him. Punctuality was one of his virtues, and he required it consequently in others: nor had it been one of Catherine's least perfections in his eyes, that she was as punctual as he was. But now she was not home at the breakfast hour; and, disregarding the decorum necessary in a young lady of her rank in life, she had walked out no one knew whither, and without a servant!—What a triumph, too, she was giving to her aunt! And the general was so conscious how much his sister enjoyed Catherine's delinquency, that he
never

never once ventured to raise his eyes to her face. However, by half past nine Catherine and Lucy returned; and blooming like the morning, from early rising and exercise, her hat in her hand and her fine dark hair floating down her shoulders, Catherine ran into the room with eager and perturbed haste, in order to excuse her not being home to breakfast.

The first glance which the general caught of her brilliant bloom and ingenuous countenance tended so powerfully to disarm his anger, that he dared not trust himself with a second look; but turning away his head, he observed "So—Miss Shirley—this is your boasted punctuality, is it?"

"My dear sir, ten has lately been the breakfast hour," replied Catherine in a conciliating but firm tone; "therefore I had no idea you would breakfast at nine to-day."

"Very

“Very true,” was rising to the general’s lips, when he reflected that he must not forgive so soon, especially as Catherine’s other fault was neither explained nor apologized for. “But why did you go out at all before breakfast, and without a servant? Such conduct is very improper in a young woman of your rank in life.”

“Yes,” cried Mrs. Baynton, “it is well, Miss Shirley, that you should remember who you are, and learn that dignity of conduct becoming General Shirley’s heiress.”

“But, madam, you must remember,” replied Catherine, “how powerful habit is; and I was so long accustomed to live as if I was not the heiress of General Shirley, that it is very natural for me to forget what I now am, and act as I did when my situation in life was humbler.”

Though Catherine did not mean to convey any thing like reproach to the general

neral by these words, yet he felt them, deeply : and as he raised his eyes to see by the countenance of the speaker with what spirit she uttered them, and saw her look was mild though earnest, her hair parting on her forehead and hanging adown her glowing cheeks increased her likeness to her father so much, and recalled him to his recollection so forcibly, at that time of his life when his hair was suffered to grow, and his open collar displayed his thick and fine-turned throat, that he could scarcely endure the various feelings which assailed him ; but starting from his seat he turned to the window and groaned aloud.

“ There, madam ! ” cried Mrs. Baynton ;
 “ you see what you have done—your poor grandfather felt the cruelty of your reproachful speech to the bottom of his heart. Though you make such a parade

L 5

of

of your Christianity, it is plain that you do not forgive."

"What have I said that could be so unjustly interpreted?" exclaimed Catherine. And running up to the general, she added, "My dear sir, indeed whatever I said was without the slightest feeling of bitterness or intended reproach."

"I believe you, my child," cried the general.

"It is more than *I* do," replied his sister.

At this impeachment of her veracity Catherine turned round with eyes sparkling with indignation, and had she worn Serena's girdle its threads would certainly have given way: but recollecting that "charity suffereth long, and is kind, and is not easily provoked," she cast down her eyes again in recovered meekness, and only said, "I am sorry I ever gave you cause, madam, to doubt my veracity."

"You

"You never did," cried the general, angrily.

"But all this time the young lady," observed Mrs. Baynton, "has never condescended to tell us where she has been."

"I have been to church, madam," replied Catherine.

"To church! What—to a methodist meeting, I suppose?"

"No, madam; I always go to church."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Quite sure." And the general almost uttered a "Thank Heaven!"

"But pray to what church? I suppose you went to hear some favourite fanatical preacher?"

"There is no sermon preached at such an hour: I only went to eight o'clock prayers at St. Margaret's Westminster."

"And why, pray, could you not have waited, and gone with us next Sunday at eleven, to hear our own excellent preacher
at

at New Street chapel, instead of going out so *improperly* and *unfeelingly* soon after your father's death? Were you impatient to go and show yourself in your smart new mourning?"

"Go to church to show myself, madam!" exclaimed Catherine: "I trust few persons, if any, go to church from such motives. No—I have not been there yet since my affliction or my illness, and I could not be easy any longer without going to humble myself, in his own temple, before that Being who in his mercy has no doubt afflicted me. I knew that the rest of the family would not go any part of the day, and I thought by going at so early an hour I should avoid the appearance of being seen at church too soon after my loss, because so few persons would be out to see me."

"My dear child," cried the general, "you have acted and felt like yourself,—
that

that is, piously and properly : but why did you not take the servant ?”

“ I forgot it,” said Catherine, “ as it is a sort of state I have not been accustomed to.”

The general again groaned aloud. And Catherine, now aware how such allusions to her former situation must wound the general, seized his hand and pressed it affectionately, without daring to trust her voice to articulate an apology.

“ Well, Miss Shirley, as you were guilty of such an outrage on propriety as to go to church at all before next Sunday, I am glad,” said her aunt, “ you went where you were not likely to be seen.”

“ I see no outrage of propriety at all in going to church so soon : going to worship the deity is a very different thing from going to a ball ; and I believe I also ought to go to church to-day, and no longer delay my duty to my Creator :—
therefore

therefore ring the bell, Catherine, for I mean to go to church at eleven with all my family."

An angry reply was hovering on the lips of his sister, when her maid answered the bell, saying all the men were out. "Then tell them when they come in that I desire they will get ready to go to church with us at eleven, and I shall want the carriage though it is so short a distance."

"Dear me, madam!" cried the pert maid to her mistress, "why to be sure you are not going to church to-day?"

"Why not?" replied Mrs. Baynton.

"Why, madam, how can you go," she answered as she shut the door, "as your new pelisse is not come home from the altering?"

"There, my dear," observed the general, "you see there *are* persons who go to church to show themselves!"

Resentment choked for a time the words

words of Mrs. Baynton: but Catherine indignantly replied, she could not bear to hear her aunt so calumniated by her servant, and wondered at the patience with which Mrs. Baynton bore her impertinence— begging her to accompany them to church, in order to show the pert waiting-maid how unbecomingly she had misrepresented her motives; which, while misunderstood, might have a bad effect on the servant's own conduct.

The *bon-hommie* of Catherine, as the French call it, on this occasion overcame the general's gravity; and giving way to a hearty laugh, he exclaimed, "My dear simple child, do you then suppose that my sister's maid does not understand her mistress's usual motives of action better than you do?"

"General Shirley," replied his sister 'with eyes on fire,' "if you choose not to understand the sarcastic severity of your darling's speech, *I do*: but I beg you and her to remember

remember that I am my own mistress, and that I will go to church or stay away as I please ; and that no one has any more business with my motives than my actions, and I will *not* go to the chapel to-day." So saying she left the room.

" But *I* will go to-day, if it be only to provoke her," muttered the general.

Catherine heard this speech, and heard it with consternation ; for she felt that the general's motives for going were quite as reprehensible as his sister's might be for staying away. Yet how should she make him sensible of this ? how could she venture, child as she was, to point out to the general an error of which he was wholly unconscious ?

" Yes—yes," said he, as these thoughts were passing in her mind, " Yes—yes—that troublesome old woman shall not have her way ; and though it is a cold day, go I will."

" No

“No no! pray do not!” eagerly exclaimed Catherine.

“Not go! when I hoped to please you and vex my sister at the same time? Not go! —And pray why not?”

“Because—because—” returned Catherine blushing and hesitating.

“Speak out, child! What are you afraid of?”

“Because it is surely wrong to go to a place of worship from any other motive than the wish of doing what is right and acceptable in the eyes of the Creator.”

“So so!” said the general after a pause, during which he felt some degree of angry mortification: “then you think I am not *good* enough to go to church with you? Very well! very well! Really I believe my sister is right, and you have a turn for the sarcastic. Very well—then I will *not* go; for I do feel that my strongest motives for going were a wish, as I said before,

fore, to spite her and please you. There, child, here comes your friend, and the urn; therefore I shall leave you to get your breakfast and afterwards go to church together again if you like it." Then, with a motion of the hand which always forbade further debate, he retired into his own library, coldly asking Lucy Merle how she did as he passed her in the door-way.

"What is the matter with the general?" asked Lucy: "he looks hurt and displeased."

"No matter," replied Catherine, not thinking it right to disclose what she thought a fault in her grandfather. But she told enough of what passed, to make Lucy Merle join her in her wish that she had left word where she was going, and had also taken the servant with her. Still Catherine, spite of herself, fell into painful reverie. She felt that she had given the general pain, when
he

he meant to give her pleasure :—but then she had only performed a duty which she thought she owed him ; and if it was always easy and pleasant to perform duties, what merit was there in it? But the general would now not go to church—and what then? as it was not the mere performance of a public rite, but the spirit and feelings in which it was performed, that made it an acceptable offering or otherwise.

Lucy Merle was not an uninterested observer, meanwhile, of the various expressions that passed over her friend's expressive countenance : but her love for her was so chastized by respect, that she did not take the liberty of asking what so evidently disturbed her. Catherine started, however, from her pensive silence, at the sound of the general's bell ringing violently ; and soon after, a servant came to tell her he wished to see her in his library.

Fearfully

Fearfully Catherine obeyed the summons. But her dread vanished when the general, who had evidently been much agitated, opened his arms to her as soon as he saw her; and after giving her a cordial embrace, said, "I sent for you, my dear, to tell you I am going to church to-day, but not till the afternoon; because I know I shall feel a great deal of emotion, and I had rather therefore go when few who know me will be there to witness it; for fashionable people never go but in a morning, you know."

"Indeed I did not," replied Catherine:

"Oh! my dear, you have much to learn yet, and are come into quite a new world, believe me. But I must tell you, in order to brighten up that pensive face, rendered so, I suspect, by the thoughts of my anti-christian feelings, that I am going to church now from motives which even *you* must approve:—namely, to humble myself

myself before the Being who has chastized me, and to bless him for his great goodness in having given to me a child like you!—a creature at once my pride, my monitor, and my example. Nay, child, look up! for you have reason, and to look proudly too;—for I believe, my dear, you will be a blessing both to me and my family: I thank you. You taught me to look into my heart; and I *blushed* for the base motives which I saw there, impelling me to *profane* the temple of holiness by going thither from an unworthy impulse—pique towards one fellow-creature, and too earthly love of another. I own I was mortified at first, to be schooled by a child; but better feelings came at length, and I trust I shall be the better for your reproof as long as I live!”

Catherine, gratified but affected, wept upon his shoulder, saying within herself,

“How

"How could this feeling and generous-hearted man have remained so long obdurate to the prayers of such a son! How bad must those persons have been whose influence over him could thus choke up in his heart all the feelings of a father, and the sympathies of the man! If he loves me, how would he have loved my mother!"

"There, my dear, leave me now," said the general; "for I wish to prepare an agreeable surprise for you against we return from church;—Be sure not to come into this room again till I give you leave."

Catherine obeyed; wondering what the general could mean. And Lucy Merle, as soon as she saw her, discovered that whatever it was that had oppressed her, the oppression was removed, and therefore probably the cause of it."

"You

"You are happy again now, I see," said Lucy, smiling affectionately.

"Yes—though almost painfully overcome by my grandfather's goodness and kindness to me."

"It will be long before you are so overcome by your aunt's, I believe."

"Hush!" said Catherine; "it is better not to dwell on the faults of others; because, by so doing, we make it only more difficult to bear with them. But I assure you I do not despair of my aunt yet; for I mean to try to overcome evil by good, and, like the patriarch of old, wrestle with her till she blesses me."

"But he wrestled with an angel; and I see no likeness to an angel in your aunt. If she does bless you, I shall be more inclined to liken her to the wicked prophet of old, blessing where he was expected to curse."

"Forbear! I beseech you," replied Catherine;

Catherine ; “ nor, in imitation of wicked wits, make quotations from the Bible the means of severe reflections on a fellow-creature—that one, too, your friend's aunt.—As we are not going to the chapel yet, I shall impose on you, by way of necessary monition, Bishop Butler's sermon on ‘ The Government of the Tongue. ’ ”

The friends then retired to their own apartment till the general summoned them to attend him to church.

CHAP-

CHAPTER X.

THE general supported himself during divine service better than he expected he should do, and bore the salutations of those few persons of his acquaintance who were at church with great firmness: but he found it impossible to present his granddaughter to them, though he saw they expected it, and darted many scrutinizing glances at Catherine through her long crape veil: but as Lucy Merle was in mourning and wore a crape veil also, none knew with any certainty which was Miss Shirley; and it was soon reported that there were two Miss Shirleys, and both beauties. As soon as they returned home, Catherine asked when she was to be permitted to enter the library again; and the general led the way to it.

Catherine had had sent to her new home

two pictures of her father and mother, heads as big as life, painted by a first-rate artist and reckoned surprising likenesses. But supposing that her grandfather would not like to see them as yet, if ever, she put them in a spare closet, where the general was not likely to come, of which Norris kept the key. Whether the general had ever heard that such pictures had been painted and seen in the gallery of the painter, or whether he only suspected it, is unimportant; but he one day asked Norris if there were any pictures of his son and Mrs. Shirley—And being told that there were, and that they were then in his house, he desired to see them unknown to Catherine. After his first burst of grief at beholding them was over, he resolved to hang them up in his library, in token of his restored love to the son so long an exile from his sight, and of his entire forgiveness of, and bitter regret for,

for, that excellent but ill-treated woman, whom he had learnt too late to value and to wish for.

“ You will find two old friends, my dear, in my library,” said the general with a faltering voice; “ and I hope you will be glad to see them: they ought to have been there long ago—but—” Here his voice absolutely failed him; and Catherine looking up, saw to what he alluded, and was for some time too much overcome to speak. To see her father’s picture hanging in the apartment of his only surviving parent was pleasing and soothing to her;—yet it was naturally to be expected, that there it would in time be placed. But to behold that mother so long disowned, so long rejected as unworthy to mix her plebeian blood with that of a noble race,—though she was formed in person, mind, and heart, in all the highest aristocracy of nature;—to behold that mother now owned

as a daughter of the family of Shirley, and displayed on speaking canvass in the favourite apartment of the very man whose rejection of her as his son's wife was supposed to have hastened her dissolution; to see this acknowledgement of her claims and her virtues, when the ear that would have hailed the sound of pardon with delight, was no longer able to hear, when the eyes that would have wept the tears of tender and grateful reconciliation were fixed in the motionless film of death,—was more than Catherine's filial and tender heart could endure without agony far surpassing every other feeling at the view; and clasping her hands together she exclaimed, "Oh! my mother! my dear, *dear* mother! It is too late! It is indeed too late!" Then sinking on her kness, she hid her face with her hands.

There are some wounds which cannot be healed, some injuries that can never be repaired :

repaired : and such wounds, and such injuries, were those which Catherine had received through the bosoms of her parents. The tardy forgiveness of the general, and the late honour which he was doing the memory of her parents, could not make her amends for the misery of seeing the death of one and the frantic anguish of the other occasioned by the general's long inflexibility ; nor could hanging up the picture of that son's wife when dead, whom he scorned while living, immediately soothe the bleeding spirit of the affectionate child, who still sorrowed over the remembrance of her distant, and her recent loss.

The general was now sensible how different her feelings were, and must be, from what he had pictured them to his expectation : and full of remorse, anguish, and disappointment, he sunk on his knees beside the weeping Catherine, and earnestly conjured her to pray to the spirit

spirit of her injured mother to forgive his cruelty, so bitterly, but properly punished.—“ She looks forgiving !” added he.

“ She was forgiving ! She was an angel !” cried Catherine rising.

“ She is an angel, I trust,” said the general with great emotion ; “ and I will pray to her as such for pardon.”

“ She always taught me to pray for you,” replied Catherine ; “ therefore I *know* she never indulged resentment against you.—How should she, sir ? have I not told you my mother was a Christian ?”

“ But I call myself a Christian, yet I indulged resentment.—But did she really teach you to pray for me, sweet creature ?” said he bursting into tears. “ And I dare say she prayed for me herself.”

“ I am sure she did.”

Catherine, while awaiting in silence till the general’s self-upbraiding agony had subsided, cast her eyes again on the pictures

tures of her parents, and beheld with something of pleasurable emotion the frames, the appropriate frames, which the general had soothed his feelings by bestowing on them. On his son's frame was a crown of laurel, and underneath, the words "*Et dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.*" On that of her mother were blended the symbols of housewifery, and the arts, geography and astronomy; for in all these the general heard from Catherine that her mother was eminently skilled, and had instructed her: underneath were these words, "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband." When Catherine read these words, she could not help feeling a sensation of gratitude towards the general, for having at least done all he could now do to show his respect to her mother's memory, and his deep though late remorse; for Catherine knew that the picture so framed would lead to questions that must display her mother's merits, and

and the general's sense of them, in the most public and strongest point of view.

"My *dear* grandfather," said Catherine at length, "I thank and bless you for this tribute to my mother's virtues: and if departed spirits are ever allowed to witness what passes here, I doubt not but that both my parents are delighted spectators of this late but soothing atonement for all that you now deplore!"

The general could not yet recover himself sufficiently to speak; but motioning her to the door with his hand, she slowly and tearfully withdrew.

Perhaps there is not a better temporary cure for sorrow than indignation; and the general was soon after roused from the indulgence of the former, by a pretty strong dose of the latter. For Catherine had not long left him, when her aunt knocked at the door of the library, and craved admittance; which, after a struggle with

with himself, he thought it advisable to grant her, as he wished that whatever comments she might think proper to make, on his having hung up the pictures of his son and his son's wife, should be made and ended in the absence of Catherine.— But prepared as the general was for a burst of no common violence, he found the anger which he witnessed far beyond his expectations, because he had not been aware that Mrs. Baynton would be provoked at seeing such honour done to the pictures of her nephew and his wife, not only because she disliked the originals from a sense of having injured them as much as was in her power, but also because the distinction thus shown them was a proof of the influence of Catherine, that object of her dislike, because she was the object of her jealousy.

But I will not relate the ravings of an angry woman; suffice that,—after having

M. 5

felt.

felt her anger much increased and prolonged by the unusual calmness, and forbearance of the general, whose temper had been recently ameliorated by the soothing influences of devotion, and his heart softened and humbled by his late scene with Catherine,—she had leisure, when she became more calm, to examine the costly frames which had been bestowed on the resemblances so hateful to her; and she hoped that, by finding fault with the general's taste, she should destroy that provoking self-command which her violence had failed to overcome.

“ Pray, General Shirley,” said she, “ may I ask what these pompous decorations on this person's frame mean? They seem to me to designate a *school-mistress*, and would do very well as a headpiece to a card issued to recommend a seminary for young ladies where music, and work, and geography, and all sorts of things

things are taught by the best masters.— Really, general, if these fantastic ornaments were meant to do your son's wife honour, you have failed in your intention; for, as it is well known Captain Shirley married some low person, it will be thought, by these symbols, that he married a woman who kept a school somewhere in Kentish Town for the children of cockneys." And as she uttered the last word, full of the mischievous pleasure derived from the hope of having given pain, her articulation was impeded by that horrible laugh,—which is in reality no laugh,—by which the malignant so often try to mask the bad feeling by which they are governed.

For a moment the general was mortified and irritated by the criticism on the frame, which he had designed in the fulness of a tender and remorseful spirit, and as a tribute to the worth which he had so
fatally

fatally despised. But the good feelings which had been so powerfully awakened in him still held their influence; and looking his tormentor steadily in the face, he said, "No, sister, there is no fear that my daughter Mrs. Shirley should long be mistaken for that respectable character a school-mistress; for should such a mistake be made, truth will oblige me to say that she was the daughter of a person who kept a lodging-house."

"How! General Shirley, have you no more regard for the family honour than to make such a declaration?" vociferated his sister more vehemently than ever.

"I shall not do it," he coolly replied, "unless the decorations on the frame lead any one into the error you apprehend.—However," added he, "I am far more anxious that the attention of my visitors should be turned to the inscription under the decoration, than to the decorations themselves ;

themselves ; as they are my late but heartfelt tribute to the virtues of one I cruelly wronged, and as a proof that those virtues at last wrung from my cold-hearted pride an acknowledgement that *such a wife* was a crown of honour to *any* husband."

There was a something so solemn, heartfelt, and touching, in the manner in which the general pronounced these words,—and what is more impressive than the accents of true contrition !—that even Mrs. Baynton was for a moment awed into silence. But she at length observed, " that all that was *very fine*; but for *her* part, she should always rejoice that the general's compunctious feelings towards his son's wife did not come till it was too late for her to profit by them ; his being a very convenient conscience, that always staid away when it was likely to be troublesome."

Even

Even *this* sarcasm failed of its effect; so much had the general's heart been amended by the experiences of the day. But he felt that he had deserved humiliation; and he resolved to bear it, in whatever shape it came, like a sincere penitent and a true Christian. Still, he did not think himself justified in exposing his new-found virtue to unnecessary trials: he therefore told his sister he wished to be alone; and she had no pretence for intruding on him any longer.

Lord Shirley came to dinner; and though on entering the room he was both affected and pleased to see the pictures hung up in the library, he could scarcely forbear laughing at sight of the angry and significant grimaces by which Mrs. Baynton directed his attention to them, and showed her disapprobation of the situation they held, taking an opportunity at the same time to whisper in his ear,
 “ My

“ My poor brother is certainly in his dotage, and that girl has it all her own way.”

But she took advantage of the accidental absence of the general and Catherine together, to vent her anger in very strong language ; and pointing to the picture of the general's second wife, which hung over the chimney-piece, she exclaimed, “ There, my lord ! there she hangs ! that lovely creature, once the general's idol ! And yet he could hang up the picture of that obscure, vulgar young woman, his son's wife,—knowing, too, how much she hated the connexion, and how much she did to prevent a reconciliation,—almost by the side of that admirable woman, who added to her other recommendations that of noble birth !”

Lucy Merle felt all her republicanism roused by this speech, and all her contempt for birth and rank unaccompanied by

By virtue. She could not, therefore, endure in silence this contumacious mention of a being whom she had learnt to love and to reverence as the first of women, and as the mother of Catherine: she therefore indignantly, and perhaps pertly, exclaimed, "Noble birth! she had better have had a noble spirit!"

Lord Shirley looked at the animated speaker with as much astonishment, though not so much anger, as Mrs. Baynton did; who, after a pause of mixed indignation and contempt, said to the earl, "Can you imagine, my lord, to whom that young person was speaking?"

"That young person, madam," cried Lucy Merle, her cheeks crimsoning with emotion, and her eyes looking that peculiar and haughty defiance which Lord Shirley had seen before, but vainly tried to remember where, "that young person is speaking to one who will understand and sym-
sympa-

sympathize with what she says:—Had Mrs. Shirley possessed a noble spirit, she would have tried to heal the breach between the father and the son, and would have forgotten Mrs. William Shirley's want of birth, in her virtues and accomplishments. — My lord, has that young person spoken justly?" added Lucy Merle, smiling as she spoke in sarcastic bitterness.

"Perfectly so," replied the earl: "such would have been true nobleness of feeling and acting, and worthy her noble birth."

"It would have been debasing her birth," exclaimed Mrs. Baynton, "to plead for a degrading alliance!"

"Well, they have both been long gone to their dread account," replied Lucy with solemnity; "and the low- and the high-born have both received the just recompense of their actions: and *I* have little doubt but that the rejected has at this moment,

moment, in the mansions of eternal rest, the precedence of the *rejector* : for who, at the dread hour of judgement, would not rather be the injured than the injurer! People do not carry their pedigrees with them there, do they, madam?"

Lord Shirley, though he felt his heart entirely on Lucy Merle's side, notwithstanding his aristocratic feelings were hurt by the manner in which Lucy Merle addressed Mrs. Baynton, thought it better to prevent a reply, if possible, from that awful lady, by commenting on the excellent manner in which the pictures were painted. But he might as well have attempted to make a bull-dog quit his hold, as induce Mrs. Baynton to give up an altercation.

"Though you are beneath my resentment," cried Mrs. Baynton, "I must tell you, miss, that I shall inform the general that he is harbouring in the house a
young

young person of most democratic principles, and who has the insolence to suppose his beloved wife is gone to a place I dare not name."

"Then you will misrepresent me grossly, madam: 'In my father's house are many mansions.' And all I said, was, that in them I doubt not but the persecuted would be higher than the persecutor;—did I not, sir?"

"I understood you so, certainly; and I must own, that, if Mrs. William Shirley was all she is said to be, I have no doubt you were right; for Mrs. General Shirley was well known to me."

"My lord, I did not expect," cried the enraged lady, "that *you* would countenance such an evident attack upon the privileged orders, as is conveyed by that young woman's remarks."

"Surely, madam, you cannot suppose me so sordidly bigoted to rank and birth,

as

as to imagine that they can stand in lieu of virtues, at the awful time to which Miss Merle alludes! If it be democracy not to entertain such an opinion, then indeed am I a democrat myself."

"Spoken like a man and a Christian!" cried Lucy; "and not at all like a lord," she was going to add, but forbore.

"I hate the *word* democracy as much as I loathe the *thing*; but, Oh! to think that my niece has been exposed to imbibe opinions like these!"

"And who exposed her to it?" cried Lucy Merle indignantly. "Had Miss Shirley's relations done their duty, she would always have been where a Miss Shirley should have been: but let me not be the means, madam, of lowering her in your esteem. Her opinions and mine are in many respects totally opposite."

"Your opinions, indeed!" replied Mrs. Baynton

Baynton with a sneer, "*your* opinions! And pray, child, what right have you to *have* any opinions?"

"You might as well ask, madam," said Lord Shirley, "what right she has to have feelings. May I beg leave to ask you what entitles a person to have opinions, if quickness of intellect and cultivation of mind, like this young lady's, do not invest a human being with that privilege?"

"My lord," cried Mrs. Baynton, "I verily believe that young lady has turned your head, or you could never have defended her in the manner you have done."

"Madam, had your niece been here, she would have had a more eloquent advocate."

"Yes—and I suppose *her* opinions would have been brought forward to shock *me*, and be defended by *you*."

"Have

“ Have I not already told you, madam,” said Lucy, “ that Miss Shirley’s opinions are different from mine? She naturally imbibed the sentiments becoming her rank in life,—it was as natural for me to imbibe those incident to mine. But whatever opinions she had imbibed, however erroneous, I ask you, Mrs. Baynton, who was to answer for those opinions? Those, undoubtedly, who by their cruelty exposed the heiress of General Shirley to obscure protection and the difficulties of a narrow income.”

Though Lord Shirley could not but admire this fluent and undaunted pleader on the side of truth as he felt it to be, and though he acknowledged the justice of her observations, he could not approve the lofty and fearless manner in which she uttered her sentiments, nor the sarcastic and severe glances which she cast on Mrs. Baynton, however deserved. “ How different,”
thought

thought he, "is Catherine to her friend! how meek, how forbearing, how self-governed! And wherefore was she thus? Because with her the faith that she professed governed every feeling and every action of her life; 'it was a lamp to her feet, and a light to her path,' shedding a sweet and constant influence over her thoughts and her temper."

At this moment, when Mrs. Baynton was going to make a bitter reply to this just reproach against the Shirley family, the general and Catherine came in, and the servant announced dinner. But still the dark cloud that lowered on Mrs. Baynton's brow was about to explode in lightning of a fierce nature, had not Lord Shirley seized her hand to lead her into the dining-room, and conjured her, for common humanity's sake, not to continue a subject which must be so painful to the general and her niece.

Still

Still it was in sullen and perturbed silence that she sat down to dinner, while the heightened colour and heaving bosom of Lucy bore evident marks that all was not yet at peace within her mind. But it was beyond Mrs. Baynton's power to be silent long, when she was in a state of irritation; she resolved therefore to vent some of her ill humour on the general.

"I suppose you have heard, my lord," she observed, "of the general's preposterous resolution to go to church to-day, so unfeelingly soon after the death of my poor nephew, and before we have gotten our cards with black edges ready to return thanks for the honour of obliging inquiries?"

"What can black-edged cards have to do with going to or staying away from church?" asked Catherine in the simplicity of her ignorance.

"Not much, apparently," said the general

neral; "nor is Lord Shirley, I dare say, at all convinced of my sister's superior love for her nephew, because *she* was not so indecorous as to go to church to-day. Besides, had I meant to be called upon, I should have gone to morning service, which I did not: next Sunday I *shall* go to it, and then it will be time enough to issue my black-edged cards. And you will go with us, I presume, sister?" observed the general sarcastically; "for then I suppose your new pelisse will be come home from the altering."

Lucy Merle, whether out of dislike of Mrs. Baynton, or because she could not help it, laughed aloud at this sarcastic speech, and drew from Catherine a reproachful glance.

"There are many reasons for you yet to learn, my dear," he continued, "why we should or why we should not neglect

VOL. I.

N

our

our devotions: but some persons of a certain rank in life,—the honourable Mrs. Baynton for instance,—cannot think of going to worship the Deity, if forbidden to do so by the god Fashion or the god Custom.”

Here Catherine, seeing the storm gathering in her aunt's eye, cast a kind, imploring, expostulating look at the general; who answering it, said, “ Yes, my dear, I understand you, and I will forbear; I will say nothing more to irritate: for I am proud to own the power of, and to be governed by, what every man ought to be pleased to obey, who thinks and feels properly,—the kind imploring look of a gentle, mild woman.”

“ Ha! ha! ha!” laughed Mrs. Baynton in a tone of derision: “ Since when, General Shirley, have you been so fond of gentle, mild women? *Obedient* enough you have been, but certainly not to an imploring look and a meek woman!

The

The late Mrs. Shirley did not lead by a smile."

"No, sister, no; she was any thing but meek, certainly," replied the general mildly, and sacrificing his resentment to the gentle influence of Catherine: "she was a young and beautiful woman, and I was an old fool, that is the truth: but she is gone, and let her frailties sleep with her. She is at *rest*—And so *am I*, I will add, or I know you would have added it for me."

"How glad I am," said Catherine, "that this conversation did not take place till the servants were gone! It was a rule with my poor mother, never to allow an observation to be made, either on friend or foe, in presence of the servants; and she has often said, that many persons wonder that they have given offence to a friend or acquaintance, when, if the cause were properly traced, it would very likely
N 2 be

be found to originate in some severe remark which had been communicated from one servant to another, and, having been overheard at the dinner-table, had at length reached the object of it."

"Then it was only before servants, was it, Miss Shirley," said Mrs. Baynton spitefully, "that your oracular and sainted mother disapproved of back-biting?"

"I hope my words," replied Catherine meekly, "did not imply any thing so unworthy of her. I said she did not allow others to talk of persons before their servants; but she herself never talked of them at all, except in praise: 'Judge not, that ye be not judged,' was a precept constantly before her eyes, and therefore operative on her conduct."

"Quoting Scripture again, child!" exclaimed Mrs. Baynton: "really the general, the earl, and myself, shall be forced to

to get our Bibles by heart, in order to be able to converse with you."

"Whatever be the motive, madam," mildly returned Catherine smiling, "I should rejoice to see you all engaged in so salutary a task."

"Well you may say what you please," she replied; "but nothing can convince me, child, you are not a downright *methodist*, a fanatic of the first order."

"You may think and call me what you please, madam," answered Catherine, "for that which I really am, will, I hope, enable me to bear any obloquy—not absolutely unmoved, but without any feeling of resentment."

"It is a pity you can't teach your friend there some of your equanimity, and milk and water spirit; for she is fire and tow, aquafortis and Cayenne pepper;—I should think you do not read out of
the

the same Testament, or you interpret differently."

"No, madam," cried Lucy blushing with conscious infirmity, "it is our practice only that is different—I am indeed a 'hearer of the word,' Miss Shirley is a doer also."

"But you both seem equally given to Scriptural quotation, I see."

"It is no wonder, madam," replied Lucy Merle, looking angry, "that Miss Shirley quotes Scripture; for it is said that many of the first martyrs, when at the stake, died with texts of Scripture in their mouth; whence they derived courage to support their sufferings."

"Well!—And how does this apply? Do you mean to insinuate that Miss Shirley is like a martyr at the stake?"

"Yes, madam," said Lucy, rising, and as if summoning all her resolution to

to strike a hard blow and then depart, looking Mrs. Baynton full in the face at the same time, "Yes, madam; I consider her as a perpetual martyr at a perpetual stake; but alas! she is not so well off as the martyrs whom I mentioned, for I see before me no probable termination of her trials and her sufferings." Then assuming all the dignity she could, she slowly left the room.

"There, general,—there! there's behaviour! there's impertinence for you!" vociferated Mrs. Baynton. "Now if you had not heard this, you would not have believed it. But Lord Shirley can tell you, she has said worse things still, and spoken in such a shocking manner of your late wife, my poor sister!"

"What! the lady you painted in such sisterly colours just now, eh? I suppose she learnt it of you. However, I must
own

own that what she just now said was *un peu fort*, and the more so for being true."

"I can only say, brother, that if you encourage your grand-daughter to bring her low-born and low-bred associates hither, to insult *me* even at your table and in your presence, I must leave your house."

"Madam, your most obedient humble servant," replied the general; "at your pleasure be it."

"Sir! dear sir!" exclaimed Catherine.

"Well, my sweet child, at your request I will be forbearing."

"What! am I to owe your indulgence again only to *her* solicitation? am I to be here, or not, at her will and pleasure? and are even my wrongs to be unresented unless she bids? I see she is working underhand to get me out of the house, with all her seeming candour; but I will not go, I will not indulge her."

"That

“That is as *I please*,” said the general.

It was now the moment for Catherine to interfere if she wished it; but it must be so desirable an object for Catherine to get rid of this perpetual stake, as Lucy Merle only too justly called her, that Lord Shirley thought it was not in human virtue for her to let so good an opportunity pass of effecting this desirable purpose, though he felt that her friend's conduct to her aunt was such as she ought in a measure to resent, however much she loved the one and disliked the other. But could she do this? Lord Shirley thought this was the greatest trial to which he had ever seen her exposed, and he trembled lest it should be too much for her.

When we see the frightful vaulting of a rope-dancer, (forgetting that all he does is by principle and habit,) we are afraid that he will not be able to catch himself on his feet again, but that he

N 5

must

must fall the victim of his daring,—and Lord Shirley at this moment felt a similar fear: for, forgetting that Catherine was governed by a principle and a habit of feeling which could not fail her in its operation on her practice, he feared she would not be able, in this trying instance, to act worthy of her former self.

But he found his error when, in a tone of voice so soothingly sweet that it seemed calculated to disarm the fiercest anger, she said, “ Surely, sir, you would not think of making the innocent suffer for the guilty. In this case my friend Lucy is evidently the aggressor ; and so far am I from wishing to bring any friend of mine here to ill treat my aunt, that, as Lucy has thought proper to insult her in a very unbecoming manner, glossed over to herself no doubt by a sense of my supposed injuries, it is my wish she should stay here no longer ; and if my aunt had not
proposed

proposed her removal, I do assure you, sir, I should."

Lord Shirley's heart exulted when he heard this; and the words "Consistent, admirable girl!" almost escaped his lips. The general looked at her with glistening eyes, but spoke not. And even Mrs. Baynton, overcome by this unexpected and undeserved verdict in her favour, put out her hand to Catherine, and burst into tears.

"My dear," said the general, "be it as you please! Follow your friend, and, if you think fit, convince her of the necessity of her leaving the house. Still I must say she is a charming creature, and I love and honour her for her devoted affection to you."

Catherine obeyed; and found Lucy Merle quite willing to go, and convinced that, though her pride as yet forbade her
to

to make an apology to Mrs. Baynton, an apology was her due.

Accordingly, the next day was fixed for her removal. But that night, whether from unusual agitation or some other cause, Mrs. Baynton was seized with a violent illness, and ere morning her life was despaired of. Consequently, as Lucy Merle would not meet her sight, there could be no objection to her staying; as, though unseen, she could be of considerable use near the sick-chamber, whence Catherine never stirred, day nor night: and while the poor invalid's pert, spoiled maid declared herself unable to endure the fatigue of such constant attendance, and took her occasional and quiet rest, Catherine wholly devoted herself to the duties of her office, and resisted even the general's repeated prayers, that for her health's sake she would allow her place to be supplied

plied by some one else. But she assured him that her health would suffer more by the consciousness that she had not thoroughly performed her duty. And, as he saw she did not look fatigued, he acquiesced, though reluctantly, in her decision.

But though unable, because odious to Mrs. Baynton, to be of as much use as Catherine, no one felt greater anxiety for the life of the sufferer than Lucy Merle. Her delicate conscience whispered, that perhaps the irritation of nerves and temper which she had occasioned her, had brought on the complaint; and her self-upbraiding was so violent, and her expressions of it so affecting, that Lord Shirley, though prejudiced against her on account of her principles and her spirit, forgot her fault in the painful severity of her repentance: and when she said, "I'm sure, my lord, I did not for a moment wish her to be prevented torturing her
poor

poor niece, by death," Lord Shirley kindly assured her, he knew she was too humane and generous for such a wish, and he believed he should see her and Mrs. Baynton good friends yet.

- At last, after a struggle of many days, the goodness of Mrs. Baynton's constitution, and the excellent nursing of Catherine, carried her through the illness in safety; and for the first time the tears of tenderness and gratitude fell on the neck of Catherine, as she was supporting the head of her aunt upon her bosom.

When the invalid was able to sit up and be left, Catherine gladly obeyed the general's summons to come down to see Lord Shirley, he promising to sit with her charge during her absence.

Grateful as is the sun after a Lapland winter to the eyes of the Laplander, was the sight of Catherine to Lord Shirley, who, till he ceased to see her and hear her, knew
not

not how necessary to see her and hear her was to the happiness of his existence! True, he had come regularly to the house twice or three times a day during Mrs. Baynton's illness, and had fondly endeavoured to catch a look at "the spot where Catherine watch'd and wept." But he had rarely seen her, though he had sometimes had the comfort of hearing her voice softly whispering her orders occasionally to the servants. But now she was come purposely to speak to him, and she seemed really glad to see him. Nay, more, he was to dine there; and Catherine promised to come and sit with him and Lucy after dinner, if the general would take her station by his sister.—During this interview the following dialogue took place between them:

"I hope," said the earl, "that I may own without offence, there is something in you, Miss Shirley, which surprises me excessively,

excessively, considering the unfavourable circumstances in which, as a young lady of birth and a probable heiress, you were so long placed; and that is, the polished elegance of your manners: for you are not only ‘good as you the world had never seen,’ but ‘polite as all your life in *courts* had been:’ whereas your friend Miss Merle, with whom you have lived during some of the most impressible years of your life, is occasionally ungentle, vehement, and even resentful, both in her language and manner.”

“I am glad, my lord,” replied Catherine blushing, “that you approve my manners, though sorry you disapprove Lucy’s: but the truth is, her standard and mine are different; with her, every thing is republican virtue, amongst which virtues she reckons freedom of speech, vehemence to defend opinions which she thinks right, at all risks and before all persons,

persons, and quick resentment eagerly expressed of any real or fancied injury to those whom she loves. But *my* standard is *Christianity*, which teaches *forbearance* on all occasions as one of the first of duties."

"But this, dear Miss Shirley, concerns *morals*, not *manners*; and I was speaking of the latter."

"Pardon me,—and so was I; for *I* believe the Gospel is the best school for *manners* as well as for every thing else; and that mother on whose manners *mine* were formed was of the same opinion."

"This is quite new to me," said Lord Shirley laughing; "especially as I have had My Lord Chesterfield's Maxims held up to *me* as rules for politeness; and I see no likeness between him and the divine teacher to whom *you allude*."

"Nor I, from what I have heard. But, do not the precepts 'Do unto others

as

as you would be done by,' and 'Be courteous one to another,' lay the foundation of that benevolence in conduct of which, after all, politeness is only the *mimic*? And were we all to regulate our lives by the Sermon on the Mount, would any of us indulge in harsh replies, in ungenerous sarcasms, or in aught that now creates dissensions amongst relatives and friends? not to mention, besides, the new and great commandment, that 'ye love one another.' "

"I cannot say," replied Lord Shirley smiling, that 'almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian,' for I hope I am one, though a negligent one, already. But seriously, you dispose me to say to myself in future, whenever I see an ill-mannered man or woman, 'Poor things, they are certainly not good Christians!' But still, such perhaps are my prejudices as a nobleman, and one who has lived chiefly

chiefly with men and women of his own rank in society, that I am surprised to find manners so elegant as your own were modelled on those of a woman of inferior birth, and who had no opportunities of seeing good company, as it is called; for though the Gospel enforces *gentleness*, gentleness does not imply *elegance* and grace."

"Nor did I know that I possessed them. But surely gentleness and softness are two great ingredients towards giving charms to the manner of a woman; and even amongst the lowest ranks, in proportion as the temper is sweet and the heart kind, you will find the manner vulgar or otherwise. My maternal grandmother was lowly born, but she was fine-tempered, so was my mother,—therefore from neither could I on my system learn vulgarity; and the latter added to her sweetness of nature such a quick perception

ception of what was fitting, and what she heard my father admire, that she profited by the slightest opportunity of seeing things or persons that ever presented itself."

"Go on," said Lord Shirley, "I love to hear you talk of your mother."

"And I to talk of her; and I hope if it be a weakness it is a pardonable one. It is offensive to hear persons boast of the wealth which they possess; but who would be disgusted to hear a poor bankrupt talk with pride and regret of the riches that he had lost? And I, alas! when I talk of my mother, am like a bankrupt numbering the treasure which is mine no longer."

"I do not wonder, now I have heard you thus expatiate on Mrs. Shirley's merits," said Lord Shirley, while Catherine paused in strong emotion, "that my beloved cousin adored her so fervently, and regretted her as he did."

"No.

“No. Nor was it likely he would ever have ceased to love her ; for so much did she think it her duty to do all in her power to keep alive in her husband, that tender love in which he could alone find comfort under his father’s anger, that whenever he left her to go to sea again, she made it a rule to learn some new language or to play on some new instrument against he returned, in order that she might agreeably surprise him by a new talent or a new accomplishment.”

“I cannot *endure* to think that she is dead without my having known her,” cried Lord Shirley with a degree of emotion which charmed and affected Catherine.

“But then,” she answered, after a pause of a few moments, “remember, by not knowing you are spared the misery of regretting her.”

Lord Shirley, seeing that Catherine was now considerably affected, thought it better

ter to change the conversation a little, by reverting to Lucy Merle.

“You have sufficiently explained to me,” said he, “why your friend’s manners are what they are, as I have had the honour of seeing her mother, Mrs. Merle, and I know her principles. But surely Miss Merle has real republican virtues—those you have mentioned are no virtues at all.”

“Oh yes! she is temperate, frugal, industrious, and self-denying. But then these are Christian virtues also; and though I admire moral virtues as much as she can do, I think them durable and precious only as they are derived from religious belief and the consequence of it. Without that, to me all morals appear built upon a sandy foundation, and are liable to be swept away by the flood of strong temptation. Here Lucy and I differ;—she thinks morality can stand alone, without the aid of religion; nay, she

she even fancies republican firmness sufficient to enable us to bear affliction. But, Lord Shirley, *C'est là où je l'attends*, to borrow a French phrase; for, if she is ever very seriously afflicted, I am sure that she will find her error, and feel that the only refuge in sorrow and in trial are the Rock of Ages and the promises of the Gospel."

"I believe it firmly," replied Lord Shirley.

Here they were interrupted by the entrance of the general, who came to say that Catherine was wanted in her aunt's apartment. But she promised to see the earl again in the afternoon. Accordingly, at the appointed time the general relieved Catherine from her duty, and Lord Shirley again saw and conversed with this interesting and beloved, though as he thought singular being. But his enjoyment was soon painfully interrupted; for

Lucy.

Lucy Merle took up the newspaper, and on coming to a paragraph in it, she gave way to a loud fit of laughter, exclaiming also at the folly and falsehood of newspaper writers or compilers. "There," said she, "Miss Shirley; read that paragraph, to show you how little newspapers are to be depended upon. Or—no, I will read it aloud to divert you and Lord Shirley." On which she read, "We hear that the all-accomplished and elegant Earl Shirley is soon to lead to the hymeneal altar his beautiful and amiable cousin, Miss Shirley,' *et cetera*," she added, as the paragraph proceeded to name Captain Shirley in a manner that would have affected his daughter.

"How excessively absurd!" said Catherine blushing a little, but without betraying any emotion favourable to Lord Shirley's wishes, while he, now red and now pale, with consciousness, confusion,

fusion, and anger, at the liberty thus taken with his name and that of Catherine, could only mutter "Very impertinent!—How strange!" and stammer out that he should insist on its being contradicted.

"I can't think what could give rise to such a report!" said Lucy.

"Nor I," faintly observed the earl.

"We have never been seen together," said Catherine; "nor have I been seen at all."

"That is clear," observed Lucy, "or the paragraph could not have been written; for every one who sees you together must see there is no love between you."

"There is no hate, I hope, Miss Merle," said the earl, timidly casting his eyes towards Catherine.

"Oh, no, my lord! but there are many hundred gradations between love and hate—and where love exists it must be discovered: you know the old Ita-

lian proverb, ‘ *L’amore è coma un pozzo in una calzetta nera, si vedi subito**.’”

Really it is a very ridiculous report indeed,—and without any foundation; for surely no two people were ever so little suited to each other, my lord, as you and Miss Shirley are.”

“ Indeed !” cried the earl, turning very pale, and nearly losing all self-command; “ that is no compliment to *me*, Miss Merle.”

“ Compliment? No, my lord, I did not mean to compliment you; but at the same time I did not mean to say anything offensive. I only meant, that in your habits and opinions there seems to me so little agreement, that no two persons ever were less calculated, I think, to be happy if united.”

* Love is like a hole in a black stocking, it is soon seen.

“ You

“ You seem to have thought much and deeply on this subject, Miss Merle,” replied Lord Shirley proudly : “ May I conclude from this, that Miss Shirley entertains the same sentiments, and is as fully aware of what I am sure was a secret to me, that her opinions and habits, and mine, were so diametrically opposite ? ”

“ I, my lord ! I entertain the same sentiments on this subject ! ” replied Catherine, with a becoming and graceful dignity of manner : “ I assure you, it is a subject on which I never even thought, much less conversed ; and I trust I am far indeed from being guilty of such indelicacy, as to consider whether any man be fit to be my companion through life, especially one who, I can with truth declare, never paid me more attention than was my due from him as a gentlewoman and his relation.—Nay, do not look so grave,

Lord Shirley," she added smiling, "I am quite sure that the *much* and *deep* thought which you attribute to my fluent friend on this subject, is the mere extemporaneous effusion of the moment. Is it not so, Lucy?"

"Entirely so, I assure you: and I was only a sagacious commentator on an absurd text; namely, the paragraph in the paper: and I am very sorry that what I so hastily said should have hurt your feelings, Lord Shirley."

"Hurt my feelings! Really, madam, this is such an extraordinary conversation, that really—I—But (looking at his watch) I see I have outstaid an appointment.' Then bowing respectfully, but coldly, he hastily withdrew.

"What a proud, captious being he is!" exclaimed Lucy as soon as he was gone: "only think of his being affronted and hurt at what I said!"

"I am

“ I am not surprised at it,” replied Catherine; “ nor does his being hurt, at all prove him to be proud or captious. He knows you think highly of me ; and then you tell him we are so wholly different, that we are not at all likely to suit each other in marriage.”

“ Well—that did not prove I do not think highly of him.”

“ No—not absolutely *prove* it : but when we like a person very much, we are always apt to fancy them like those we love best. I wish you had not said what you did.”

“ Perhaps,” returned Lucy with great quickness, “ you are not so convinced as I am of the unsuitability subsisting between you and Lord Shirley.”

“ Perhaps not : yet, on my honour, it is a subject that never till this moment came before my mind ; and I should think
it

it improper to dwell on it even for a moment."

"But he has thought on it, I suspect; and if so, I fear he may succeed. Yet, Heaven forbid! I could not bear to see you his wife. I think I had rather that you married any one else."

"Nay, Lucy, not so: the truth is, you dislike the idea of this union, because you see more likelihood of it at present than any other. You would dislike any man I loved, and hate any marriage I might form."

"True; you are right. The idea of your marrying is indeed a painful one to me."

"I know it, and I can enter into and excuse your feelings;—but you are sure that whenever I love, and am likely to marry, you will be the first person informed of it."

"How

“ How generous and considerate!” answered Lucy. “ But—”

“ This is a subject we had better drop,” said Catherine. “ But do let me beg you not to dislike poor Lord Shirley.”

“ As you do not tell me not to dislike him for your sake, perhaps I may oblige you ;—but indeed he is very proud.”

“ That idea proceeds, I am sure, from your prejudices against all lords, for to you he is particularly civil.”

“ *Civil!* Aye, so he is; he seems to make a point of being civil to me, because he feels the difference in our rank, and never forgets that he is an earl, and I only the daughter of a bankrupt shopkeeper in a country town. I dare say, in his heart he says, ‘ How amiable it is in me to pay so much attention to that young nobody!’ O the pride of that humility, how I hate it!”

“ Prejudice! Lucy—all prejudice; and
it

it proceeds from your dislike of nobility, not of this individual nobleman."

"Perhaps my opinions may have some influence, and warp my judgement; for I have heard him utter excellent sentiments. Still I am sure, if he marries you, with his high notions of family consequence and feminine propriety, he will never let you see any of your old friends,—and he will make you drop my acquaintance for ever." Here she burst into tears.

"Depend on it, Lucy," replied Catherine, "I can never love a man capable of requiring this."

"You will not know it before you marry. Men in love promise any thing: but the husband rarely performs what the lover promised."

"Then I will never marry, lest I learn to think meanly of my husband. But indeed, Lucy, you are again unjust; there are men of principle in the world. And why

why may I not meet with one? If I do not, rely on it I will never marry a man who is not incapable of requiring from me a sacrifice unworthy of him to ask and of me to grant."

"But you forget that the wife has duties which the mistress has not. Before you marry, it is the lover's place to obey; after, it is yours."

"True; but highly as I estimate the duty of a wife, I believe the duty I owe to God and my conscience to be paramount to every other duty, and all duties do not merge in the duty of obedience to a husband: therefore I should not think myself bound to give up the dues of love which I owe to an old friend, at the imperious mandate of a husband, or at least not without proper consideration."

"You talk this well;—but suppose your husband knew that you were the depository of a secret, would your idea

of the duty of a wife allow you to withhold it from the command of your husband, if he required you to disclose it?"

"I would never consent to be the depository of a secret *after* I was married, which I might not disclose to my husband: but whatever secret I had promised solemnly not to disclose before marriage, I should think it my duty never to disclose after, a duty even superior to that which I owe to my husband. Do you doubt me, Lucy?" she added reproachfully.

"No, indeed I do not," replied she sighing. And here the conversation ended.

Lord Shirley meanwhile had left New Street in a most painful state of mind; for though he believed that Catherine spoke truth, in saying she had never spoken or even thought on the subject which Lucy had so openly discussed, that very truth was, he feared, a proof of her utter indifference towards him; and the unembarrassed

barrassed manner in which she talked of the paragraph confirmed this apprehension. And oh! how far did he feel himself from sharing this indifference! The situation was indeed a new as well as a painful one. And did he,—the man on whom female admiration had been lavished till he sickened at it,—did he to whom hearts and even hands had been tendered, sometimes with the surrender of the usual decorum of the sex,—did he at length sigh for one who neither wished for nor was conscious of his homage? Was he at last to receive the punishment of his scorn and coldness to others, by meeting with scorn and coldness himself? Was he at length to be taught to pity those whose love he had rejected, by having his own love met by indifference and disdain?

“Well,” said he to himself, “I will not go near her tomorrow, I am determined:

ned :—nay, I think I will not go again while that prating, forward, democratic girl is there : she will never be my friend, because I am a nobleman ; and though Catherine has not her prejudices, still we are insensibly influenced in our likes and dislikes by the opinions of those we love and live with. No—I will not go thither as I have done ; and then perhaps she may miss me : yes, yes, I see I have made myself too cheap, as the phrase is.” But “ to-morrow comes,” and beholds Lord Shirley again in the general’s house. —He found the friends together.

“ I am glad you are come, my lord,” cried Lucy when she saw him ; “ it is later than you usually call, and I was afraid I had affronted you yesterday evening by my unthinking remarks.”

Lord Shirley was almost piqued into replying, that he really could not say her remarks were of consequence enough to
influence

influence his actions in any way: but his love of truth, as well as his politeness, forbade it; for he felt that her remarks had been such as he could not forget, and that were rendered of consequence also by their probable effect on another: he therefore merely replied, with some embarrassment, "How could you suppose so, madam? I am not so easily offended." Then approaching Catherine with more conscious gravity than usual, he asked how her invalid did.

"Oh! so well, and so kind! I believe now, Lord Shirley, in spite of your prognostics that I have conquered her aversion and made her my friend; for she kissed me to-day very affectionately, and told me she believed that she owed her life to my good nursing:—what do you think of that, my lord?"

"I think," replied Lord Shirley, "though I am sorry to destroy the hope
of

of your benevolent heart; that these good dispositions will last only as long as does your aunt's seclusion ; because it is not so much hatred of you which she feels, as it is jealousy ; and while you come in no competition with her, she will cease to feel unkindly towards you ; but the moment she is again in a situation to feel you as a rival in power, influence, or importance of any kind, then the old feelings will return, and your trials recommence."

"I do not doubt it," said Lucy, "though I see my candid friend does: therefore, before she re-appears in all her terrors, it is expedient I should depart."

"Not so," replied Catherine; "I hope to make your peace with her now."

"You are wrong in wishing such a thing," answered Lucy: "I know myself too well, not to know that though we were reconciled to-day we should quarrel again tomorrow: therefore pray let me depart

depart quietly, that you may make the most of the bright days which you are anticipating."

"I think," said the earl, "you show your judgement, Miss Merle, in that desire, as I feel assured that there must always be something volcanic in your friendship with Mrs. Baynton;—a tendency to explode, to which it would be unpleasant to trust."

"But I shall be so sorry to lose your society!" cried Catherine.

"I hope so," replied Lucy sighing, "selfish as such a sentiment may seem; but no doubt that you will soon have many new friends to replace me—Aye, and lovers too, perhaps," she added with a forced smile and a look of great meaning.

Lord Shirley almost started as he observed this; but he could not prevail on himself to ask what she meant. Catherine herself, however, immediately relieved his

his perplexity, by begging her to explain her meaning.

“ I mean,” said she, “ that poetical youth, who was presented to you to-day by his father, and evidently with a view that he should become your lover.”

“ Nonsense !” exclaimed Catherine : “ it was very natural, surely, for Admiral Dormer to wish to present his son to me, without any secret motive.”

“ What !” cried Lord Shirley, changing colour, “ has Harry Dormer been presented to you to-day ?”

“ Yes : and he seems a very pleasing young man.”

“ Pleasing !” said Lucy, “ but I do not wonder you think so, as he has written a poetical tribute to the mémoire of Captain Shirley.”

“ Has he done so ?” asked the earl with emotion.

“ Yes ; and very pretty it is.”

“ I like

“ I like his verses,” said Lucy, “ better than I do him, though he is pretty and clever-looking, and modest enough, considering that he has a large independent fortune, and is nobly allied.”

Though Lord Shirley was rather displeased with the severity and freedom in which Lucy Merle was apt to indulge herself in speaking of others; still, as he looked on young Dormer as a formidable rival, he was not sorry to find he was no favourite of Lucy’s; and viewing her with complacency, he said with a smile, “ Poor Dormer! so he also is no favourite of yours?—I conclude he too is diametrically opposite to your fair friend in habits and opinions, and therefore wholly unfitted to make her happy in an union for life?”

“ I do not know that he is,” replied Lucy blushing; “ but this I must say, that

that in my opinion he is not to be compared to—”

“ To whom ? ” said Lord Shirley, seeing that she blushed and hesitated.

“ To—to—you, my lord.”

At this unexpected compliment Lord Shirley bowed very low, and blushed with ill-concealed pleasure ; while in his heart he began to regret what he before rejoiced at, namely, the approaching departure of Lucy.

Lord Shirley now rose to take leave, having an appointment elsewhere ; and bidding adieu to Catherine, he approached Lucy, and taking her hand, said with great kindness, “ that he sincerely regretted her stay in New Street was so unavoidably short, but that he hoped she would be to be seen there sometimes.”

“ Or at home,” observed Catherine, wishing Lord Shirley to pay Lucy the com-

compliment of calling on her : and he, taking the hint, begged to be permitted to inquire concerning her health at her own house.

Lucy, piqued because she saw that this civility originated with Catherine, gave a cold permission; and the earl, rather mortified, withdrew.

The next day, to Catherine's great joy, the family removed to Hampton Common; though that joy was much damped by parting with her friend. But Lucy, aware how impossible it was for her to agree with Mrs. Baynton, made light of the separation to Catherine; though, when she saw her no longer, she gave way to all the agony a mind like hers must feel at exchanging the society of one with whom she could have lived for ever, for that of a mother who was ill calculated to reward by her conversation or tenderness

ness those attentions which her exacting spirit demanded.

Though winter was not the time to exhibit the country to advantage, still Catherine saw reason to be delighted with the situation of the general's country-house, and earnestly hoped that they should not return to London till the first of June, and proceed to Hampton immediately after the birth-day. Not so the invalid, who rather reluctantly admitted the necessity of change of air, for the entire recovery of her health; and who, as Lord Shirley had foreseen, no sooner was able to appear at dinner as usual, and mix in her usual society, but she became piqued and mortified by the deference and attention paid the young heiress, and all her desire to tease and mortify her niece returned. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that as soon as she

she was entirely restored to health, she should be anxious to leave a scene that was the source of perpetual mortification to her ; and that, finding the general and Catherine had determined to remain in the country, she should resolve to return to London. Accordingly, she very soon resumed her residence in New Street.

Her departure spread through the household a degree of cheerfulness and relief, which none can imagine but those who have felt the heavy pressure on the spirits, that is imposed even by one bad-tempered individual in a family, and have experienced the consequent delightful rebound, when that pressure has been removed ! Catherine wondered at her own improved elasticity of motion as she bounded from room to room, conscious that they no longer contained the dark spirit that had imprisoned hers : while the general, the
day

day after her departure, declared that he had not felt so much at his ease for years; adding, "If I could but forget my poor boy, and my cruelty to him and his angel wife, I believe I should be quite happy!"

To Catherine's happiness he fancied Lucy Merle was necessary; and he wrote to request her company, now his sister was gone. But her mother refused to spare her so soon again, and Catherine and he were left to the resources of their own minds; which proved indeed sufficient for happiness. Catherine had no difficulty in giving the general her own impressions on all subjects of importance, and her own pious habits and useful pursuits soon became his. Her musical powers were now called forth to enliven their solitude; and the general heard with delighted surprise, such singing and such playing as he had certainly

tainly never heard before from amateur performers, owing to the different views which had led to Catherine's proficiency.

It might be supposed that those ladies or gentlemen who learn music with a view to a sort of public display, would have a stronger motive to excel, and to take surer means to do so, than those who only wish to please the ear of a few partial friends. But vanity is always so impatient to receive its tribute, that it is very apt to grow tired too soon of the labour necessary to bestow excellence. Consequently we see pupils singing bravuras, when they should still be practising *sol feggi*, and playing Cramer's Lessons, before they are perfect in the art of fingering, or the science of thorough bass. But Catherine's mother carried into every thing which she learnt herself, or taught her daughter to learn, that holy love of truth, which distinguished her in more impor-

important concerns. "It is not enough," was her favourite axiom, "that one seems to others to understand anything; but one's own approving mind must be conscious that we really know it." On this principle therefore, and from the simple love of truth and excellence, Catherine went through all the practical and mental drudgery necessary to enable her to excel in every branch of music; and as she rose very early, and her time was not frittered away in idleness, visiting, and amusements, the hours which she bestowed on music, bore only their fair and relative proportion to those that she gave to graver studies. It was the purity of the motives, probably, which led her to seek such excellence in this art, that prevented her from feeling the vanity usually attendant on it. Besides, in this, as in her religious habits, Catherine was quite ignorant, from the seclusion in which she had

had lived, that others were not in the habit of thinking and acting as she did, and she was no more conscious that her musical knowledge was uncommon, than that her piety was.

Lord Shirley, meanwhile, rejoiced at the removal of his relations from New Street, because he considered Catherine as thereby removed for a time from all constant attentions but his own; since his relationship and intimacy would authorize him to pay more frequent visits to Hampton than any other pretender, and he should also have a good excuse for changing morning calls and dinner visits into staying visits of at least two days in length. Accordingly it was not long before he drove down to Hampton Common, and received, as he expected, an invitation to stay a day or two.

It was during this visit that Lord Shirley for the first time heard Catherine

VOL. I.

P

display

display her musical powers, which, as he passionately loved music, would have been alone sufficient to have made him court her society ; and as it was, they riveted his chains more closely than ever. Reluctant indeed was he, therefore, to return to London, and leave a spot which the alternation of exercise, reading, singing, and playing, made one of rational and ever new enjoyment. Even the eccentricity of Lucy, who had once more joined their party, had charms for him ; and he forgave her contempt of ancient institutions, and her Utopian dreams of liberty, in favour of her devoted love to Catherine, and the fine voice and taste which, as the pupil of her friend, she exhibited both in songs and duets. Nor could Lucy be the intimate associate of such a man as Lord Shirley, without feeling her prejudices against rank considerably softened, and owning that
his

his virtues were almost sufficient to redeem the vices imputed to his peers. The first of June at length arrived ; and Catherine, reluctantly throwing off her mourning, prepared to return to London and give her final orders relative to her dress, which was made ready to receive them.

As soon as the general and Catherine arrived in London, Lord Shirley called in New Street : and as he happened to call just as Mr. Dormer, who had preceded him by half an hour, had engaged Catherine's whole and delighted attention, by talking to her of her father, who had been his model of excellence, when as a boy he was presented to Captain Shirley ; the earl fancied that Catherine received him coldly, and that her manner to Dormer betokened a particular preference of him. Still however, though mortified to find how much Catherine continued to attend to her new acquaintance,

ance, he lingered near her ; and at length Mr. Dormer departed.

But he was scarcely gone, and Catherine at leisure to attend wholly to Lord Shirley, when a note was brought her, which the servant said was from Miss Merle ; and on reading it Catherine betrayed strong emotion, and then fell into so profound a reverie that again her noble relation seemed forgotten. “ I wonder what that note contained ! ” thought Lord Shirley, whose tendency to suspicion was easily awakened wherever his affections were concerned—“ But, let it contain what it may, it is very certain that I have now received two complete proofs this morning of her indifference towards me : therefore it is better for me to tear myself away from the scenes she is now going to move in ; and certainly I will not witness her triumphal entry at St. James’s.”

While he was thus communing with himself,

himself, Catherine had regained her composure, and, turning round to Lord Shirley, with one of her sweetest smiles told him she hoped he meant to dine with them, as it was so long since they had seen him.

“I was at Hampton only a week ago,” coldly replied Lord Shirley: “but I will have the pleasure of dining here to-day, as I go away so soon.”

“Go away!” exclaimed Catherine in a tone of alarm; “I hope not to stay away?”

“My—my stay will be very uncertain, I believe.”

“That is a comfort,” she replied: “but I trust that you do not mean to go till after the birth-day?”

“Indeed I do—I shall set off to join my regiment, to-morrow or the next day.”

“To join your regiment!” said Catherine thoughtfully: then recollecting herself,

self, she added with great warmth, "I cannot express to you how disappointed I am at the idea of your not being at St. James's, I expected to feel myself so supported by your presence, and so encouraged by the glance of your kind eye!—My dear lord, do put off your journey, pray do, for the sake of your poor inexperienced cousin!"

Though this kind and flattering address was as much a proof of indifference in one sense, as her inattention to him had been, still it operated in a pleasant manner on his irritated feelings and his wounded self-love: and looking in her face with delighted earnestness, he assured her that, had his plans been even more fixed than they were, they should have been given up at her slightest desire. "I wish, thought he, "I dare ask what that note contained. She has too much habitual self-command to feel such strong emotion
for

for a trivial cause. I hope Miss Merle is well?" he at length said.

"Quite well."

"What fine spirits she seems to have! I trust they are never overclouded."

"O yes! frequently," replied Catherine with a sigh.

"Love, I think, will never have power enough over her to injure her spirits."

"I am not sure of that; but at present she is, I know, a stranger to the passion."

"The only time I ever saw Mrs. Merle, she spoke of her daughter with much fondness, and told me that *now* she was her only child. She has therefore had the misfortune to lose a child, or children, I conclude?"

Catherine paused before she answered: then fixing a sort of inquiring look on Lord Shirley's face, she said, "No—
I do

I do not think Mrs. Merle ever lost a child."

"Then what could she mean by laying such an emphasis on the word *now*?"

Catherine paused again, and put her hand to her forehead, as if endeavouring to remember something. "I recollect now," she replied, "that Mrs. Merle had once a little boy who lived to be six weeks old." She then talked of something else; but Lord Shirley took an opportunity of renewing the conversation concerning the Merles.

"I have often thought," he said, "that the last three years of your life must have been passed by you most unpleasantly; as you lived with, and amongst, persons wholly unsuited to you."

"On the contrary, I look back on them with great satisfaction, because my mind was considerably strengthened, and
my

my character improved, by the mental discipline they made me undergo, and the necessity they imposed on me of fixing my whole dependence on the only help that faileth not."

"Nay then—your trials must have been greater than I expected?"

"Perhaps so—or rather you mean by trials, great afflictions: but there are trials, particularly those which are imposed by the bad temper, the petty faults, and even the vices of others, which are, I suspect, more difficult to bear, and more inimical to happiness, than what is denominated an affliction. My only apparent affliction when I came to Mrs. Merle's, was the recent loss of my mother. But under this how great was my consolation! I knew that 'those are blessed who die in the Lord!' therefore, when I mourned over my mother's untimely death with the weakness of filial

P 5

affection,

affection, I used to check and overcome my sorrow, by the conviction that my earthly loss was her immortal gain!"

Here Catherine turned away to vent the emotion which the recollection of her mother always occasioned her, in a few natural tears; for though it was true that she rejoiced as a Christian, she still sorrowed as a daughter. Lord Shirley did not behold this expression of tender regret unmoved; but he was very glad that no one heard the pious language which preceded it but himself, as he knew that her aunt had prepared the circles in which she moved, to find Catherine a preaching methodist; and he was sure that the most common expression of piety such as this was, would have only served to confirm this idea.

At length she turned round again, as if prepared to renew the conversation; and Lord Shirley observed, that he concluded

cluded one of her trials must have been, being forced to associate with persons wholly different from herself in political opinions, as he concluded that Lucy Merle's sentiments on such subjects must have been derived from her parents and their associates.

"No doubt," replied Catherine: "for, independent of the little interest which I take in such discussions, I think that all party spirit whatever is a spirit wholly opposite to that of Christian love and any feeling of true philanthropy, and I used to seek refuge from such conversations in my own room. But Mrs. Merle is a fierce politician; and my disappearance on these occasions, which she attributed to aristocratic pride and prejudice, used to awaken in all its bitterness the violence of a temper never distinguished for its gentleness; and that was indeed a trial of my patience."

"But

“ But it is strange that a woman of such sentiments in politics should have been so outrageously loyal as to insist, under such circumstances, on illuminating for a victory at which she could not rejoice?”

“ Not at all—if you consider the operations of ill temper. She vented her spleen occasioned by the victory, in teasing me; and for the sake of indulging her bad temper, she was willing to sacrifice her political consistency: besides, she is an œconomist, and wished to preserve her windows.”

“ How freely, however, do I forgive her that last vent of temper and œconomy,” said Lord Shirley, “ as it shortened the slow work of time, and brought you to the knowledge of your relations!”

“ Yes,” returned Catherine, “ my transient pain led, I trust, to my lasting good:—But I am sure, my dear lord,” she continued,

tinued, "it cannot be interesting to you to talk of or hear any thing concerning the Merles and my residence with them. Suffice, that I began there to learn the lesson of patience, endurance, and forbearance, which I am likely to perfect here,—a lesson as new as it was difficult,—for I had lived with none but persons blest with fine tempers; and I am sure that those only, who have lived with the slaves of ill temper, can imagine in the slightest degree what misery temper is capable of inflicting."

Catherine was mistaken. Lord Shirley was more interested in talking of the Merles, and in the three years passed under Mrs. Merle's roof, than in all the rest of her life; as he feared that she must have been injured in some way by associating with persons so inferior to herself; and he also fancied that some degree of mystery attached to her abode with them,
especially

especially as Catherine had talked of trials from “the temper, the petty faults; and even vices of others,” and yet she had only mentioned the trials she experienced from the former. But the entrance of the general and Mrs. Baynton prevented his renewing the subject then. And as the misrepresentations of the latter relative to her amiable niece had made her more than usually disagreeable in Lord Shirley’s eyes, he took leave soon after she entered, having promised to return to dinner.

The fourth of June at length arrived; and Catherine, struggling with the secret load of filial sorrow, saw that time draw near which her exulting parents had so often anticipated,—that time when, restored to his father’s favour, Captain Shirley should present his wife and daughter to the sovereign in whose cause he had fought and bled.—*Now* those eyes were closed,

closed, that would have delighted to behold her admired; those ears were deaf, that would have greedily drunk in the sound of her praises;—and she sighed to think how empty are the gratifications of one's own vanity, unless they give pleasure to the hearts of those who love us.

She hoped that she should pass unnoticed. But “Yet how,” said she to herself, “can I escape observation? The gallant death of the father will attract notice to the child; and a degree of interest not due to my merits, but the effect of his valour, must be excited by me in the loyal precincts in which I am going to move.”

Catherine was now satisfied that she had found out a point for her humility to rest upon. It was for her father's sake that she was to be noticed,—and the feeling was one of tender complacency.

It was settled that Lord Shirley should go with the general in his own landau, while

while Catherine accompanied the Duchess of —, who was to present her. Catherine had shown him only on the preceding day, another paragraph announcing their intended nuptials. However, she had blushed deeply when she showed it to him, and she had not done so before: still he wished she had been desirous of concealing, not exhibiting it. Lord Shirley in his heart would not have been sorry for the report, because it might keep other pretenders at a distance, had he not known that Catherine's appearance at court would itself be a sufficient evidence that she could not be on the eve of marriage.

Mrs. Baynton was glad to take advantage of her recent illness, as she chose to call it, as an excuse for not accompanying her niece; since she knew that she should feel no pleasure if she was admired, and might experience considerable mortification.

Lord

Lord Shirley and the general reached the drawing-room before the duchess and her fair charge; and the anxiety with which they expected her appearance was probably, though from different modifications of interest, very nearly equal. At length the circle opened to admit them; and Catherine Shirley, blushing at the busy admiration which she excited, and affected at the whispered though laudatory mention of her father's name, was presented to the notice of Majesty, and underwent the customary introduction.

When she had passed on and fallen back into the circle, she found Lord Shirley at her elbow; and soon after she saw the king speaking to her grandfather, and directing an approving eye towards her.

“How well you have gone through this ceremony!” cried Lord Shirley kindly. “How completely have all the high-raised

raised expectations of—of—the general been fulfilled ! Adieu to all our quiet, rational evenings together at Hampton !” he added with a sigh : “ now you have been seen, who that can have you at their parties will fail to give them their brightest ornament ?”

“ But what if I will not go ?—what if I prefer a continuation of the evenings you mention ?” she replied, “ admitting, which I do not admit, that I shall be in such great request ?” At this moment, and before Lord Shirley could reply, Catherine raised her eyes, and met those of a gentleman on the opposite side fixed on hers with surprise not unmixed with confusion. At sight of him she started, and blushing deeply averted her eyes directly, but with a look of surprise: then speaking low to the duchess, she begged to know who that gentleman in green and gold was.

“ It is one of the most elegant, captivating,

tivating, and accomplished men of fashion we have," replied Her Grace, "and I am not surprised that you observed him."

"Indeed!" cried Catherine. "But his name?"

"Melvyn: he is a man of some family, I believe, and has a very large fortune. But see, he has made his way to the general, and is I dare say saying something that has found its way to the general's heart: so prepare yourself to have him presented to you immediately."

"No, madam, no," returned Catherine eagerly: "I know,—I am sure Mr. Melvyn will not desire to be presented to me."

"No! But—" Here some one accosted the duchess, and she turned away to converse with a group near her.

In the meanwhile Lord Shirley was enduring great uneasiness of mind. He had seen the expression of Melvyn's face
when

when he looked at Catherine, and hers when she looked at him; and it was thence evident that they had met before. But why should they both look confused as well as surprised? And was this the explanation of the something untold, that had happened during Catherine's residence with Mrs. Merle? The thought was agony; for, of all men living, Lord Shirley felt that he should fear him for a rival; he knew the acuteness of his intellect, and the charms of his manner and conversation.

The general now advanced with Mr. Melvyn; and Lord Shirley was going to watch the countenance both of Catherine and him, when two ladies accosted him, and he was forced to give his attention to them. Catherine received Mr. Melvyn's low bow, deep sigh, and deprecating look, with a conscious blush and a carriage of increased dignity; but still she was more
vexed

vexed than surprised, when he took an opportunity of saying in a low voice, but loud enough for her, and her alone, to hear him, "Can I ever hope for pardon from Miss Shirley, for my presumption of former days? Will she not deign to feel for an unhappy man, who ventured to adore her with a disinterested, though perhaps presumptuous passion, and was the first to do homage to those charms which crowds will now approach with incense and adoration?"

Catherine heard this speech with more complacence than it deserved, because it healed a wound which her delicacy had received; but she replied to him, notwithstanding, in no very courteous language: "Sir," said Catherine, "it will be to the credit of us both, to forget we ever met before: and I will endeavour to set you the example."

The truth was, that Catherine and
Lucy

Lucy had been in the habit of walking out together, unattended by a servant, at an early hour in the morning; and one morning they were overtaken on the Kent road by Mr. Melvyn, who being struck with their appearance, had left his gig to his servant, and had followed them on foot. From silent he proceeded to loud admiration of Catherine, and had walked by their side, unawed by their cold demeanour, till they stopped at the house of a friend. There they remained some time; and the maid-servant having assured them there was no longer a gentleman in sight, they proceeded on their walk home: but Melvyn soon overtook them again, nor left them till they reached their own house, at the door of which they knocked in a manner which convinced him that was their home. The first thing, therefore, that Melvyn did, was to inquire who and what the person was who lived there. And from the

the

the account the neighbours gave of Mrs. Merle's appearance and mode of living, so different from the elegance visible in the dress and mien of Catherine, it was very natural for Melvyn to fancy the object of his admiration might not be beyond his reach. He therefore took care to watch for hours every day near the house. Whenever the friends walked alone, he followed them, whispering out his passionate admiration; but when they staid within, purposely to avoid him, he used to walk up and down before the windows; till at last Mrs. Merle, justly offended at his boldness, went out one morning and told him she *insisted* on his never presuming to walk before her windows again, or to speak to the young ladies; for that one of them was her daughter, and the other was under her protection, and she was *fit for his betters*. Without meaning it, Mrs. Merle by this elegant phrase confirmed

firmed rather than forbade his hopes ; for he concluded that Catherine was the actual or intended mistress of some man who had put her under the guardianship of a vulgar but vigilant spy. Accordingly, knowing that there were only women in the house, he walked past the window again and again. But at last a more formidable champion than Mrs. Merle appeared to warn him off the premises, and Melvyn thought proper to abandon his design.

Catherine and Lucy all this time imagined that the stranger admired Catherine with a view to marriage ; therefore, though distressed, they were not disgusted by his conduct. But Mrs. Merle immediately guessed the truth ; and her opinion being corroborated by that of others, Catherine was forced to admit the probability of her being right ; and her delicacy was consequently excessively wounded, by finding that she had been the object of improper

per views. But Melvyn's words brought back her original opinion, and she felt disposed to pardon the temerity of one who had admired her when she appeared an obscure and unprotected girl, and not as the heiress of General Shirley.

Melvyn, though he knew not the cause, saw that his apologies were received much better than he expected ; and as he soon discovered that the report was false which had declared the earl and Catherine to be lovers, he resolved to follow up the advantage he had gained, and obtain on honourable terms as an heiress, the lovely girl whom he had wished to make his own on less respectable conditions. Besides, he had a double motive for this pursuit, which I shall explain hereafter.

Lord Shirley was all this time talking or rather listening to the ladies before mentioned, and watching Catherine and Melvyn ; but seeing the general beckoning him

him, he bade the ladies a hasty farewell and drew near the general, who had just told Catherine it was time to retire, and had withdrawn her from the side of Melvyn.

The general now begged Lord Shirley to get up the carriage, as Catherine was not to return with the duchess; and leading her from the presence-chamber, they went to the top of the stairs to wait till the carriage was announced. Lord Shirley soon returned, to say that they could walk to it; and the general going before them, gave Catherine to the care of her younger protector.

The crowd on the outside of the piazza was excessively great; and as Lord Shirley remarked it to Catherine, she cast her eyes over it. Immediately she started, changed colour, and clung with trembling emotion to the arm she held. Lord Shirley witnessed her emotion with wonder as well as alarm, and asked her if she was ill.

“ It

“ It is over—it is past,” she cried, stopping to recover her breath, “ and let us hasten to the carriage;” casting as she spoke, a startled glance on the crowd. Lord Shirley followed the direction of her eyes, but saw nothing to explain her agitation; and in silence they both joined the general in the carriage.

“ Miss Shirley was quite ill just now,” said the earl.

“ Indeed!” cried the general. “ But I hope, my dear, the air has recovered you—to be sure the drawing-room was very hot; besides, you must have undergone a great deal of emotion.”

“ A great deal, indeed!” said Catherine sighing. And Lord Shirley thought the reply meant more than it appeared to the general to mean.

In Pall-Mall there was a stop of carriages; and as Lord Shirley put his head out of one window, to see how soon they

were likely to proceed, Catherine leaned out of the other; but quickly drawing her head in again, she became very pale, and betrayed great agitation.

“My dear child, you are ill again,” cried the general. And Lord Shirley turning round, beheld all the same symptoms of uneasiness renewed.

“Lionel,” cried he, “do call to the coachman, and tell him to stop at the first perfumer’s shop for some of the best sal-volatile.” And Lord Shirley, regarding Catherine with a scrutinizing look, obeyed.

When the coach stopped as desired, Lord Shirley offered to get out for what she wanted; but Catherine, catching his arm, so earnestly entreated him to remain where he was, that, though surprised at her vehemence, he acceded to her request. But it was in uneasy thoughtfulness that he did so. Why was Catherine thus violently affected!—and why was she averse to

to his getting out! Lord Shirley dared not inquire; and had he even been capable of indulging his curiosity by questions and remarks disguised by that coarse and vulgar banter which many persons indulge in, there was a dignity in Catherine's manner and also in her character which would have awed him into forbearance. He knew, therefore, that he must remain in perplexed ignorance on the subject. But had he recollected that the dignity of character which he observed in Catherine was a pledge of such uprightness of conduct as must prevent her emotion from having its rise in any unworthy cause, he would, though he remained ignorant, have been neither uneasy nor perplexed. But he was unhappy of a suspicious nature; and how can men of that description, however highly gifted and however virtuous, be either uniformly just or uniformly generous?

Q. 3.

Catherine's.

Catherine's silence was as profound as Lord Shirley's; but this the general attributed to indisposition, which fear was however contradicted by the brilliant colour on her cheek. Some ill-humour mingled with the earl's silence; and as he could not, dared not, interrogate Catherine on the subject most uppermost in his mind, he could not help questioning her on one of nearly equal interest.

"It seemed to me, Miss Shirley," observed the earl, "that you and Mr. Melvyn were not strangers to each other when you met to-day!—you had met, I believe, before?"

"Yes—yes, we had—I had seen—yes, I had seen him several times before," answered Catherine in great confusion.

"Very extraordinary that!—why did he not tell me so?" exclaimed the general. "Surely he could not visit at Mrs. Merle's?"

This was what Lord Shirley most
anxiously

anxiously wished to know, but could not on any account have commanded his feelings sufficiently to ask.

Oh! no—he did not visit at Mrs. Merle's, certainly," replied Catherine, recovering her composure, and relating the manner in which Melvyn had become personally known to her.

The general looked displeased; but he sighed also, for his obduracy had thus exposed Catherine to insult.

"Villain!" muttered Lord Shirley between his shut teeth.

But Catherine heard him, and replied to his term, by observing, "Surely, my lord, you in this instance judge Mr. Melvyn uncandidly, as there was nothing in his conduct to warrant the idea that his designs against me were dishonourable.—Do you think there was, sir?" she added, addressing the general.

"My dear, I really do not know what to think—Melvyn is a man of excellent character."

character :—but this I know, I cannot be very angry with a fine young man for admiring you, especially as my conscious heart tells me, that, however derogatory to you his views might be, it was I who had exposed you to such an equivocal situation.”

“ Not *angry*, sir!—not angry !” exclaimed Lord Shirley, his fine face crimsoning with indignation : “ Can you endure to think any man ever presumed to cast an unhallowed look on such a being as that ! . . . Not angry !”

“ Whew ! whew !” whistled the general. “ My dear Lionel, your anger is so excessive that you have exhausted the family stock, and there can be none left for my use. Well, the days of chivalry are not over, I see, and your sword, at least, would be ready to leap from its scabbard to revenge even a *look* that threatens her with insult !”

During these remarks Catherine was experiencing

perienicing no very unpleasing sensations; though they dyed her cheeks with blushes and cast her eyes on the ground. For though her delicacy was wounded by the idea that Melvyn had dared to think of her in an improper light, still that delicacy and the proper pride of her virtue were gratified by the manner in which Lord Shirley entered into and shared her feelings, and the noble warmth with which he had resented the supposed insult.

“ Upon my word, general,” said Lord Shirley, at length resuming his self-command, “ I am shocked at the warmth into which I have been hurried. To be sure I have no right to resent Miss Shirley’s injuries.”

“ No right !” interrupted the general, “ How so ? are you not the head of her family ? She is a Shirley—and I earnestly hope she may continue so.”

The last part of this speech was spoken
low ;

low ; and Catherine, if she heard, did not understand it. But it was not lost on the earl, who in a transport of grateful pleasure seized the general's hand and pressed it affectionately.

The coach now stopped at the general's door; and the earl after handing Catherine out, and venturing for the first time to press the hand he held, re-entered his carriage, and drove home to meditate on his hopes, his fears, his perplexities, and his suspicions. Then his rival ! Melvyn his rival !—for it was now clear that he would come forward as such. And if the idea of Dormer's paying his addresses to her was a formidable one, how much more so was the certainty of Catherine's affection being sought by one skilled in all the arts of soft persuasion, and avowedly a favourite of her sex. But was she like the rest of her sex ? was she likely to be won by manners however specious, and

and accomplishments however brilliant? No, certainly not.—Still Lord Shirley doubted, for he was in love; and well has the poet said, that

“ The lover is a man afraid——”

“ And feels his own demerits most,
When he should most aspire to gain.”

Catherine also retired to her own room in order to think over the scenes she had lately gone through; and she could not help being conscious that, triumphant over every other feeling, was pleasure at the animated and flattering tribute of respect and regard which Lord Shirley had paid her, by his resentment of Melvyn's supposed degrading admiration of her: and she was indulging no unpleasant reverie, when she was informed that Lucy Merle was below. She started at hearing this, and desired her to be shown into her dressing-room.

The conference was long and painful:

so

so much so, that when Lord Shirley came to dinner, Lucy Merle passed him on the stairs with her eyes swollen with excessive crying; and when Catherine herself appeared, she looked more than usually pale, though her rigid adherence to truth made her reject the offered excuse for her paleness suggested to her by the general, in the excessive heat of the weather.

But why was Catherine pale, and why was Lucy Merle distressed, thought Lord Shirley;—and his painful perplexity was increased by the consciousness, that, whatever was the cause of these appearances, he had no right to demand an explanation of them.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

Printed by R. and A. Taylor, Shoe-lane, London.

YA 08815

